

CHAPTER 5 Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element

Section 5.1 Introduction

The agricultural, natural and cultural resources of the Town of Almond are perhaps the single most important reason why people choose to live here. Natural woodlands, varied and abundant wildlife, and productive farms and farmland all come together to create a unique Wisconsin landscape.

The residents of the Town of Almond recognize the value of their unique landscape and understand that it supports and sustains a way of life they are proud of. For those who choose to farm the land here, the community supports their efforts and works to minimize barriers that impede this economically viable industry. The residents also understand that the identification and protection of the historical and cultural resources of the community will help sustain a rich quality of life that is enjoyed by all who settle here.

Section 5.2 Agricultural Resources

A. Agricultural Potential Based on Land Evaluation Site Assessment Rating (LE-SA)

The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system is a point-based approach that is generally used for rating the relative value of agricultural land resources. In basic terms, a given LESA model is created by defining and measuring two separate sets of factors. The first set, **Land Evaluation**, includes factors that measure the inherent soil-based qualities of land as they relate to agricultural suitability. The second set, **Site Assessment**, includes factors that are intended to measure social, economic, and geographic attributes that also contribute to the overall value of agricultural land.

A Land Evaluation (LE) rating was developed for use across all of Portage County. **Higher numbers mean a greater value for agriculture.** LE ratings reflect this productivity potential, as well as the economic and environmental costs of producing a crop. Possible LE ratings range from 0 to 100. Many physical and chemical soil properties are considered in the LE rating, either directly or indirectly, including soil texture and rock fragments, slope, wetness and flooding, soil erodibility, climate, available water capacity, pH (alkalinity versus acidity), and permeability. Three soil property indexes were combined to produce the LE rating; prime farmland classification, land capability class – natural condition, and productivity index. All three of these indexes are published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

A Site Assessment (SA) rating was also developed for the Town of Almond. As with the LE rating, higher numbers mean a greater value for agriculture. The combined Land Evaluation factors are worth 100 points as are the combined Site Assessment factors. The LE and SA scores are added to yield a potential final score for each two acre block ranging between 0 and 200 points, with a score of 200 representing lands that are of the highest value for agriculture (excluding specialty crops such as cranberries). Communities will then determine an appropriate threshold for ranking lands recommended for protection (i.e. areas with a score higher than 150 and are greater than 40 contiguous acres). Weighting factors can be changed by each community to reflect its own priorities. See Appendix E for a complete explanation of this system.

The Town of Almond has decided to use the LESA model as an advisory tool to help identify areas in the community that should remain in agricultural use.

B. Highly Productive Agricultural Soils

Highly productive agricultural soils in the Town of Almond have been identified, with the assistance of the County Conservationist, based on highest productivity and lowest degree of limitations for farming (Map 5.1 Highly Productive Agricultural Soils). Slopes greater than 6% were excluded from the “highly productive” designation (due to severe hazard for water or wind erosion), along with small parcels and stony, rough, and eroded sites. Highly Productive Soils in Almond include:

- Billett sandy loam, 0-2% slopes
- Richford loamy sand, 0-2% slope
- Richford loamy sand, 2-6% slope
- Rosholt loam, 2-6% slope
- Wyocena sandy loam, 2-6% slope

C. Farming Systems, Demographics, and Land Tenure

The agricultural landscape of the Town of Almond can best be described as a “coming together” of farming systems. The Town is located near one of the two major farm regions in Wisconsin. First, and most prominent is the dairy region. In Wisconsin, dairying is most concentrated in a belt that begins near Hudson (St. Croix County), heads east to Wausau and Green Bay (Brown County), then turns southwest through Fond du Lac, Madison and ends near Dubuque (Iowa County). Wisconsin Department of Agriculture 2002 permit information listed three active grade-A dairy farms operating in the Town of Almond. To the north in Buena Vista, there were eleven farms; to the west in Pine Grove, three, and to the northeast in Lanark, six.

The second farming region that includes Almond is that of fresh vegetable production. The irrigated soils of the “Golden Sands” region of Wisconsin lay between Amherst and the Stevens Point area. Almond is on the southern edge of this large irrigated plain and there are a number of producers who have concentrated vegetable operations within the Town. While no exact acreage numbers are available, the presence of pivot irrigation rigs is one key indicator of vegetable production. Although there were approximately 55 irrigation pivots in Almond in 2000, some of these fields may not have been used for vegetable production.

The amount of land dedicated to agricultural production can and often does change from one year to the next. In 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department analyzed aerial photography of Almond to identify active farmland within the Town. The land in farms was broken down by presence of irrigation, 12,719 acres; use for row crops or hay, 3,216 acres; and permanent pasture, 354 acres. Total agricultural acres identified for 2000 were 16,289.

There were 68 persons employed in an agriculturally-related field in the Town of Almond in 2000 (Table 1.10, Issues and Opportunities section). This represented 17.7% of employment for the Town. Although this is down substantially from the 1980 figure of 91 persons (36%), Almond does still have a higher percentage of agriculture-related employment in 2000 when compared to the Portage County Town average (6.9%). Decreasing farm employment is not a unique trend by any means. The number of farms is decreasing, while acreage per farm is up. Farm consolidation is a common practice in this industry.

D. Farm Economy and Infrastructure

Because of the lack of farm economy information available at the Town level, a detailed discussion of the farm economy at the Town level is not practical. Please see the complete discussion of the Portage County farm economy in the Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resource element of the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.

Map 5.1 Highly Productive Ag Soils

E. Other Local Influences on Agriculture

The Almond area has historically not seen great pressure for the development of rural residential properties. However, increased interest in Almond can bring more homes onto the agricultural landscape, which in turn could lead to increased potential for life-style conflicts; increased assessed value of non-farm lands; and most importantly, increases in the sale price per acre of land beyond the point of being economically viable for purchase as farmland.

F. Agricultural Programs

A number of programs are available to agricultural landowners to help achieve desired outcomes ranging from enhancing wildlife habitat to minimizing soil erosion. The following is a partial list from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For more information about these and other programs contact the local NRCS office at 715-346-1325 or the Farm Service Agency at 715-346-1313.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program, administered through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, one can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. Participants enroll in CRP for 10 to 15 years.

Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

EQIP may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of eligible conservation practices. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a farmer to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been drained for agriculture.

Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10- year duration

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Landowners agree to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

provides technical and financial assistance to implement the wildlife habitat restoration practices.

Section 5.3 Agricultural Issues

The following agricultural issues were identified during the comprehensive planning process through public comment or by the plan commission:

- How can the Town protect productive farmland?
- The irrigated vegetable industry is the economic engine that drives the Town of Almond. The Town understands the need to protect the land base that supports this farming industry.
- How can conflicts between farm and non-farm uses be minimized?
- Because of the high gravel content of the soils around Wolf and Patterson Lakes, housing density should be restricted to 1 home per 40 acres.
- Nitrates in the groundwater are of concern in the Town, but it is difficult to pinpoint an exact source, be it natural or man made. Concentrations of nitrates in well water vary greatly based on location, depth of well and rate of draw.
- How can the Town protect groundwater from excess pesticides and herbicides?

Section 5.4 Agricultural Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Protect productive agricultural lands in the Town.

Objective 1.1: Identify productive agricultural areas in the Town using the LESA model.

Policy 1.1 (a): Protect productive agricultural lands through the continued use of A1, Exclusive Agriculture Zoning.

Goal 2: Future development does not conflict with agricultural operations.

Objective 2.1: Encourage low density, non-farm development in areas away from intensive agricultural activities.

Policy 2.1 (a): Recommend new non-farm residences should be built at least 200 feet from lands zoned A1 due to dust , noise, spreading of animal waste or sludge, aerial or ground spraying, irrigation, etc.

Goal 3: Utilize agricultural practices that are environmentally sensitive and protect air, soil, water, and wildlife resources.

Objectives:

3.1. Encourage land use practices which protect the quality of surface and groundwater resources, including minimizing the loss of soil or agricultural chemicals to ground and surface water, as well as the proper location and maintenance of on-site sewage systems associated with residential development.

3.2. Encourage soil conservation practices that minimize erosion, including the retention and development of wind breaks.

Goal 4: The agricultural community is economically viable for the mutual benefit of the farmers and residents of Almond.

Objective 4.1: Maintain the agricultural land base and encourage a wide range of agricultural practices.

Section 5.5 Natural Resources

Natural resources in the Town serve as the foundation for residents physical and economic well being – from groundwater quality to land suitability for agricultural, residential, or commercial development. According to the results of the 2001 Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Survey, Town residents favored managing the natural resources that support and sustain them.

This section will describe the existing natural resources inventory and state the issues, goals, objectives, and policies that were identified and adopted by the Town of Almond Plan Commission and Town Board.

A. Geomorphology

The present Portage County landscape primarily reflects the last or Wisconsin stage of the pleistocene or glacial epoch (Holt, 1965). The glacial ice transported large amounts of rock debris known as drift. The drift is called till if deposited directly by the ice, and outwash if placed by glacial meltwater. The Town of Almond is located along two geologic provinces. The eastern portion of the Town is situated in the drift province. The drift province covers the eastern 1/3 of the County and is made up of a series of end moraines that represent the accumulation of ice-transported debris that piled up at the forward edge of the ice sheet. The hills and ridges are composed of sandy till.

As the ice melted and the end moraines were formed, large amounts of ice-transported materials were removed by the meltwaters. This glaciofluvial (outwash) material was deposited between and in a large area to the west of the moraines. The deep sand and gravel deposits of the sand plain province, which includes the western portion of the Town, were formed in this way. The sand and gravel is well sorted and contains only small amounts of silt and clay. Deeper gravel deposits are found adjacent to the end moraines. The sands are generally finer further from the moraine. The thickness of outwash deposits ranges from less than 30 feet northeast of Stevens Point to over 200 feet near the outer moraine, and averages about 100 feet.

The topography of the Town is generally flat to slightly rolling and includes two moraine ridges and a few lowland wet areas. The elevation ranges from 1,320 feet above sea level in the northwest part of the Town to 708 feet above sea level in the southeast corner. Depth to bedrock throughout the Town is 75 feet or greater. The highest mean sea level elevation in Portage County is located in the northeast portion of the Town, approximately one mile southwest of Wolf Lake (Map 5.2).

B. Soils

Soils in the Town (Map 5.3) can be grouped into three soil associations, as follows:

- **Wyocena-Rosholt association:** Well-drained, gently sloping to very steep soils that formed in loamy deposits and sandy glacial till or outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found in the northeastern corner of the Town and are used for crops, pasture or woodland. Wyocena soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a medium water capacity. Rosholt soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a low water capacity.

- Kranski-Coloma-Mecan association: Excessively drained and well-drained, gently sloping to very steep soils that formed in sandy glacial till or in deep sandy deposits. These soils are found primarily along the eastern edge and central portion of the Town, and are used for woodland or pasture. These soils have a rapid to moderately rapid permeability and low to medium available water capacity.
- Richford-Rosholt-Billett association: Well-drained, nearly level to gently sloping soils that formed in sandy and loamy deposits and outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found in the western and central part of the Town and are use for crops, woodland or pasture. These soils have a moderately rapid permeability and a low to medium available water capacity.

Soil testing by a certified soil tester is strongly recommended for more detailed, site specific information.

C. Surface Water, Wetlands, and Flood Plains (Map 5.4)

The major surface water bodies that are present in the Town of Almond are: Wolf Lake, East Lake, Bass Lake, and Washburn Lake. All the lakes are located along the southern and eastern edges of the Town. Other surface water features in the Town include Duck Creek, located in the northwestern corner of the Town, which flows out of Almond into the Town of Buena Vista. A two year lakes study was conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the Portage County Land Conservation Office to assess the characteristics of 29 lakes in the County. Specific results of this study for Wolf Lake can be found in Appendix G.

The Town of Almond is situated in the Fourmile & Fivemile Creek, Sevenmile & Tenmile Creek, and the Waupaca River watersheds. A watershed can be defined as interconnected areas of land draining from surrounding ridge tops to a common point such as a lake or stream junction with a neighboring land area. Fluctuations in surface water elevation are more evident in Almond due in part to its close proximity to the groundwater divide.

Wetlands are an important part of the watershed, acting as a filter system for pollutants, nutrients, and sediments, along with serving as buffers for shorelands and providing essential wildlife habitat, flood control and groundwater recharge. Wetlands within the Town of Almond are very limited, but include three general types: forested, scrub or shrub, and emergent/wet meadow.

- Forested wetlands are the predominant type, including bogs and forested floodplain complexes that are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as, tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, and silver maple. These wetlands are located primarily along Duck Creek in the northwest corner of the Town.
- Scrub/shrub wetlands are the second most abundant type. These wetlands, which include bogs and alder thickets, are characterized by wood shrubs and small trees such as tag aster, bog birch, willow and dogwood. These are also found primarily along Duck Creek and Bass and Washburn Lakes in the southwestern corner of the Town.
- Emergent/wet meadow, the third most numerous type of wetland within Almond, consists of areas that may have saturated soils more often that having standing water. Vegetation includes sedges, grasses and reeds as dominant plants, but may also include blue flag iris, milkweed, sneezeweed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster. These types of wetlands are found in limited areas in the Town, primarily along the edges of Bass and Washburn Lakes.

Map 5.2 Topography

Map 5.3 General Soils

Map 5.4 Wetlands, Surface Waters

Map 5.5 Groundwater Flow

Map 5.6 Atrazine Prohibition Area

A flood plain is defined as that land which has been or may be covered by floodwater during a regional flood. The flood plain includes the floodway and flood-fringe areas. A 100-year flood is defined as a flood event having a one percent chance of reaching the 100-year flood elevation in any given year. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a flood occurring once every 100 years. A 100-year flood plain then, is the area adjoining a river, stream, or watercourse covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, none of the areas surrounding waters in the Town are designated as flood plains.

D. Groundwater

The majority of the Town of Almond is located in a geologic province known as the sand-plain province. The sand-plain province is considerably different from the rest of the County in that the basement sandstone bedrock is far from the surface, and the unconsolidated aquifers above it are not very limited. The depth to bedrock is greater than 75 feet, and the depth to groundwater varies greatly, between 20 and 200 feet.

All Town residential water use comes from groundwater sources, therefore, protection of this resource is important. There is generally a thick unsaturated zone, however, given the sandy soil type, there exists little second line defense against pollutants regardless of the nature of the subsurface materials. Although some soils ranked moderate to good in pollution attenuation, this area of the County should be considered vulnerable overall given the sandy soil type.

Potential pumping yield rates for groundwater generally range from 500-1,000 gallons per minute throughout the Town. This rate is high when compared to areas west of the Wisconsin River where rates rarely exceed 50 gallons per minute.

An interesting feature to point out is the presence of a groundwater divide that has a north-south orientation in the center of the Town (Map 5.5). Water to the east of the divide is part of a larger drainage basin that flows or drains into Lake Michigan, while groundwater to the west of the divide drains into the Wisconsin River and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico. The exact position and width of the divide is not known, but is depicted based on the most recent data set available to the County. Data collection for groundwater monitoring is an on-going process and the Town should work with the County and other research organizations to maintain the most current information possible. Knowing groundwater flow can be a helpful piece of information when determining proper siting of well and on-site waste systems.

1. Atrazine Prohibition Areas

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is researching the health effects of atrazine in water. Drinking water that contains atrazine will not cause immediate sickness or health problems (acute toxicity). However, consuming low levels of atrazine over time may cause health problems (chronic toxicity). The EPA is also concerned that atrazine may be an endocrine disruptor which can cause unintentional hormone-like activity in the body.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is responsible for protecting Wisconsin's groundwater from contamination by pesticides and fertilizers. Their authority to restrict the use of a pesticide that is contaminating groundwater at levels above health-based standards is found in the Wisconsin Groundwater Law, [Chapter 160 of the Wisconsin Statutes](#), and by department rule in [ATCP 31, Groundwater Protection Program](#). The rules for restricting the use of atrazine and other pesticides in Wisconsin are part of [ATCP 30 - Pesticide Product Restrictions](#) and the county maps showing the location of the prohibition areas can also be found in the rule in [ATCP 30 - Appendix A](#).

Atrazine has been detected in wells within the Town of Almond and because of this, prohibition areas have been defined within the community (Map 5.6, Atrazine Prohibition Areas). Approximately 2,560 acres of land are within the prohibition area in the Town of Almond. The lands are found in the west central portion of the community.

E. Wildlife Habitat and Forested Areas

When people think about wildlife, birds, fish, and mammals most likely come to mind. It is important, however, to consider all organisms that make up an ecosystem in order for that system to continue providing the maximum benefit to humans and the environment. Town residents recognize the fact that human beings play a role in protecting or restoring, as well as, degrading or destroying wildlife and its habitat. They also recognize that while it will be very difficult to preserve all ecosystems in the Town from human encroachment or interaction, it is the desire of residents to protect wildlife habitat where practicable.

The biggest threats to wildlife are loss of habitat quality and quantity. These threats can be attributed primarily to fragmentation, invasive species, and pollution. **Fragmentation** refers to the loss of large, contiguous sections of land through subdivision into smaller parts, which can lead to an alteration and possible degradation of the native plant and animal communities on these properties. **Invasive species** (both plant and animal) tend to out-compete or prey on native species, altering the native ecosystem. **Pollution** can lead to habitat degradation, and cause birth defects and increased mortality rates in animal species. Habitat areas are important for providing food and cover for nesting, brooding, and sheltering. Farmland is one type of habitat that also provides food, as well as travel corridors between wetlands and woodlands.

Woodlands or forested lands account for 28% of the land area in Almond (Map 5.7), while wetlands make up 1%. According to 2001 County survey data, 79% of respondents felt that an effort should be made to identify and protect woodlands, and 76% felt the same about wetlands and flood plains. Woodlands are present in the Town primarily due to an inability to sustain successful agricultural practices in those areas. Loss of these habitat types can threaten the viability of certain species.

One option open to all private landowners owning ten or more acres of woodlands is the Managed Forest Law Program. The MFL program is intended to foster timber production on private forests while promoting other benefits that forested lands provide. Participants in this program have the option to choose a 25 or 50 year contract period and pay property taxes at a reduced rate on enrolled lands. A portion of the difference in property taxes is recouped by the state at the time of a timber harvest when a yield tax is imposed based on the volume of timber removed. For more information regarding specific requirements and how to enroll in this program, contact the WI Department of Natural Resources.

1. Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known rare and endangered animal species identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) that are located within the Town and Village of Almond area, however the Karner blue butterfly has been identified by UW-Stevens Point biologists as an endangered species rarely occurring near the Wolf Lake area. Rare and endangered plant communities include the Sand Prairie (or Dry Sand Prairie) and wild lupine (also near Wolf Lake). Wild blue lupine is the only food for the Karner blue butterfly's caterpillar. These elements should be taken into consideration when development and protection measures are considered. A detailed description of rare and endangered plants and animals can be obtained from the WI DNR.

Map 5.7 Forested Lands

F. Air Quality

The following information comes from the WI DNR and the Environmental Protection Agency:

A few common air pollutants are found all over the United States. These pollutants can injure health, harm the environment and cause property damage. The Environmental Protection Agency calls these pollutants **criteria air pollutants** because the agency has regulated them by first developing health-based **criteria** (science-based guidelines) as the basis for setting permissible levels. These pollutants include: ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and lead. One set of limits (**primary standard**) is designed to protect public health, including the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly; another set of limits (**secondary standard**) is intended to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. A geographic area that meets or does better than the primary standard is called an **attainment area**; areas that don't meet the primary standard are called **non-attainment areas**.

All of Portage County, including the Town of Almond, is listed as an attainment area by the WI DNR.

G. Non-metallic mining

The glacial and geologic history of Portage County has made conditions suitable for certain types of non-metallic mining. Along the moraines in the eastern third of the County, glacial deposits have resulted in some lands that are desirable for gravel and aggregate extraction. This is in contrast with lands west of the Wisconsin River where soils are heavier and have a higher clay content.

With the significance of sand and gravel deposits in the Town of Almond, there are several sand and gravel pits located in the Town. There are currently five active sand and gravel extraction sites located in the west-central part of Almond.

Section 5.6 Natural Resources Issues

1. Nitrates in the groundwater are of concern in the Town, but it is difficult to pinpoint an exact source, be it natural or man-made. Concentrations of nitrates in well water vary greatly based on location, depth of well and rate of draw. How can levels of nitrates in groundwater be reduced?
2. Pesticide/herbicide applications need to be done in a way that protects our groundwater resources. Groundwater depths vary from 200 feet in the northeast corner of the town to 20 feet in the southwest. This depth does provide some level of protection from immediate contamination.
3. Oak wilt management is of vital importance to the community. The Town would like to see regulations regarding the timing of cutting of Red Oak to prevent spread of the disease. Educational programs should also be developed to inform landowners and loggers of the issues related to oak wilt.
4. Mining operations should be well screened and in harmony with their surroundings. Hours of operation should be agreeable with those affected by the activities. How can the Town reduce conflict between existing uses and non-metallic mineral operations?

Section 5.7 Natural Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Identify, manage, preserve and protect natural resources throughout the Town.

Objective 1.1: Encourage land use practices which protect the quality of surface and groundwater resources, including minimizing the loss of soil or agricultural chemicals to ground and surface water, as well as the proper location and maintenance of on-site sewage systems associated with residential development.

Policies:

1.1 (a) Utilize the Conservancy Zoning District to protect important or fragile environmental areas, including the shorelines of navigable lakes and streams, as well as adjoining wetlands.

1.1 (b) Work with the County to maintain a list of landowners who have registered interests in non-metallic resources.

1.1 (c) Promote agricultural practices that are environmentally sensitive and protect air, soil, water and wildlife resources.

1.1 (d) Encourage partnership efforts that result in the preservation and restoration of natural resources.

Objective 1.2: The protection of natural resources are taken into consideration when development occurs.

Goal 2: Natural resources that provide recreational opportunities on public land are managed to ensure their lasting presence.

Objective 2.1: Maintain the Wolf Lake area as a valued natural resource.

Policy 2.1 (a): Encourage the County Parks Department to continue to maintain Wolf Lake Park.

Objective 2.2: Units of government work together to define and develop appropriate public access to natural resources.

Policy 2.2 (a): Request the assistance of the DNR when reviewing the “navigable” status of various lakes and streams in the Town and reclassifying those waters which do not warrant a “navigable” designation.

Section 5.8 Cultural Resources

How can you know where you’re going if you don’t know where you’ve been? Cultural and historic resources often help link the past with the present and can give a community a sense of place or identity. These resources can include historic buildings and structures along with ancient and archeological sites.

Burial sites are one example of a resource that can add to a community’s sense of history as well as provide a great deal of genealogical information. Formally catalogued burial sites are protected from disturbance in Wisconsin and are given tax treatment equal to that of operating cemeteries.

Information regarding cultural and historic resources in the Town is constrained by limited financial and human resources. This section will provide goals and policies that promote the effective management of historic and cultural resources.

A. Cultural and Historic Resources Inventory

A wide range of historic properties have been documented that help create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. Descriptions of existing locations are identified on the list of historic places by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Keep in mind many of the properties included in this inventory are privately owned and not necessarily open to the public, so please respect the rights of private property owners. At this time, there are four listings in the Town of Almond, which include different kinds of houses. Some of the structures on the sites listed, however, may no longer exist.

Another source of information comes from the National and State Register of Historic Places. There are currently fourteen sites listed throughout Portage County, however, none of them are located in the Town of Almond.

There are seven cemeteries located in the Town, as identified in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

B. Cultural Resource Programs

At the state level, the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board (WHRAB) works in association with the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Board's activity falls primarily into three areas: it provides guidance and assistance to archives and records management programs in Wisconsin, promotes the value of historical records as keys to our cultural heritage and works through partnerships with statewide organizations whose purpose and goals support that end, and to bring federal grant funds to Wisconsin for improving access and preservation of historical records.

Section 5.9 Cultural Resource Issues

There were no issues identified by the Plan Commission concerning cultural resources.

Section 5.10 Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: The general public is more aware of cultural resources.

Objective 1.1: Work with the Portage County Historical Society to help identify cultural and historic resources in the Town.