

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As the Town of Ridgeway continues to grow, it is vital that it keep in mind the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources of the area. It can be very challenging for rural communities to allow new low-density development and at the same time protect the natural environment and preserve the character of the area, including cultural and historic resources. At first, development may have only a limited impact on the natural landscape, but as development continues, the visual and environmental impacts become more and more apparent. For these reasons, it is crucial to be aware of the existing agricultural, natural, and cultural resources.

There are a number of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources to be aware of as we plan for the future, including the following:

**Agricultural Resources**

**Natural Resources**

**Cultural Resources**

Number of Farms

Water Resources

Historic Buildings

Acreage of Farmland

Topography

Museums

Livestock

Geologic Resources

Landmarks

Crop Production

Forest / Woodlands

Churches

Farmland Potential

Wildlife Habitat

Rural Schools

Soil Capabilities

Parks and Open Space

Cemeteries

Soils

Air and Light



**Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(e)**

*(e) Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element*

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources, parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

**AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES**

The following are the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources policies for the Town of Ridgeway. (Parcel splits and minimum lot sizes are addressed in Section H, Land Use Element.)

- **Routinely remind residents of the importance of their agricultural, natural, and cultural resources and the need for continued protection of local open spaces to provide recreational opportunities.**

Tell residents about the agricultural, cultural, and natural resources in their Town and let them know ways they can support and protect them. Flyers included with a tax mailing, articles in the local newspaper, workshops, or other similar education efforts can help inform residents.

Work with the Village of Ridgeway, the Towns of Brigham, Waldwick, Arena, and Dodgeville and Iowa County to protect contiguous natural areas that give local residents space to pursue recreational opportunities.

- **Build partnerships with local clubs and organizations in order to protect important natural areas.**

Work with local chapters of groups like Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Trout Unlimited, and local sportsman's clubs that all have a common interest of protecting the environment. Cooperation can reduce duplication of effort and in turn cut costs.

- **Encourage and support prairie and savanna restoration.**

- **Enforce noxious weed control ordinances.**

At both the national and state level, concern is growing about non-native species that threaten the stability of native or more desirable plant communities. In order to protect the agricultural and natural resources of Iowa County from invasive, noxious weeds, local ordinances designed for the mutual benefit of citizens and the environment should emphasize education, prevention and cooperation between landowners and governmental agencies.

- **Support tree preservation and sustainable forestry practices.**

Trees are important components of a community's green infrastructure. A healthy population of trees offers substantial environmental benefits, including cleaner air and water, quieter streets, cheaper energy bills, cooler temperatures, and wildlife habitat. In addition, trees can provide numerous economic advantages, such as increased property values and lower air and water remediation costs.

- **Maintain proper separation distances between urban and rural land uses to avoid conflicts.**

It is important to maintain separation distances between urban and rural land uses, as issues often arise such as neighbors complaining about noises, smells, chemical sprays, and farm machinery on the roadways.

- **Identify recharge areas for local wells and inventory potential contaminant sources.**

Contamination of local drinking water resources can be devastating and very costly to reverse. Be aware of recharge area locations for wells and potential contamination sources. Again, education of residents on local water resource issues may be beneficial.

- **Restrict development from major drainage areas in order to aid in stormwater runoff and prevent flooding.**

Refrain from developing drainage ways and floodplains that serve as stormwater runoff systems. Drainage basins were established naturally for a reason and should be preserved.

- **Promote tourism opportunities and continue to pursue efforts to capitalize on local resources in conjunction with programs like walking tours, the Wisconsin Historical Markers Program, distributing ATV or bike trail maps, maintaining trails, and preserving the natural beauty of the area.**

Every jurisdiction is unique and can capitalize on its historic or cultural significance and natural beauty. For example, tours can be walking, driving, or biking with certain areas of cultural or environmental significance identified.

- **Utilize County, State, and Federal programs to conserve, maintain, and protect agricultural, natural, and cultural resources.**

Numerous state and federal programs aim specifically at protecting farmland, wetlands, forests, historic buildings, etc. There are agencies and contact information at the end of this section.

### **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Agriculture plays an important role in the past and future of southwestern Wisconsin. Even though this plan is being developed for the Town of Ridgeway, the importance of agricultural resources in the surrounding area should not be underestimated. Farming is important aesthetically, culturally, economically, and recreationally to the Town of Ridgeway.

### **FARMING CONFLICTS**

The Plan Commission did not identify any conflicts between farm operations and non-farm neighbors.

### **FARM EXPANSION**

As farming becomes more global, the forces driving agricultural change are reflected in the decline of traditional agricultural commodities. One strategy farmers have begun to follow is farm expansion and modernization. Expanding can help farmers maintain their net income and can sometimes also lead to efficiencies and lower production costs. Modernization strategies can also help improve farming operations. However, expansion and modernization bring with them possibilities of greater impacts to the local environment, as well as issues such as modernized farms needing fewer employees, resulting in local agricultural job losses. Larger operations may also require larger manure handling facilities, increasing the chances of more spills or odor complaints. The Town of Ridgeway believes that size limits should be placed on farms in the Town. In particular, the Plan Commission wants to limit factory type farms or large confinement operations that will contribute to air and/or water pollution.

### **YOUNG FARMERS**

One challenge facing farming in southwest Wisconsin is the lack of young people to replace a generation of older farmers. While farmers are retiring at the same rate, fewer young people are getting into farming. Communities seeking to retain their local agricultural economy and way of life need to consider strategies that will bring new or young people into farming. The Plan Commission believes that better prices for farm products would bring young people back to production agriculture.

### **FARMING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Farming infrastructure includes businesses and services such as a feed mill, equipment vendor, or veterinarian might supply. Farm supply businesses and food processing facilities represent important resources to area farmers as well as the broader local economy; the Town of Ridgeway does not have any farming infrastructure.

### **FARM TYPES**

The Town of Ridgeway Plan Commission believes multi-enterprise (e.g. beef, dairy, and crops) should be encouraged, rather than single enterprise farms (e.g. only dairy, only soybeans). Specifically, the Plan Commission encourages the following types of farm operations:

- Dairy Operations
- Organic Farming
- Beef-Cow/Calf Operations
- Cash Crop Operations
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

The Plan Commission does not encourage hog, sheep, dairy, or beef-finishing farming operations of over 500 animal units within the Town of Ridgeway.

**FARMER RETIREMENT**

Land has inherent value but it is also valuable for what it produces and as it provides the farmer with a source of retirement funds. Trying to find a middle path of conserving farmland while enabling farmers to retire by profiting from their land is a statewide issue. The Town of Ridgeway Plan Commission suggested a transfer of development rights (TDR) program wherein development rights are sold from farms to areas unsuitable for agriculture. This permits density control and yet allows all farm owners to participate in increased land values.

**FARMING AND COMMUNITY VISION**

It is essential to the Town of Ridgeway's community vision to maintain both current farm operations and agriculture in general.

**FARMING DATA**

As indicated by Figure E.1, between 1987 and 2002 there was an overall increase of 335 farms in the county. (The US Agricultural Census defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have produced and sold during the census year.)

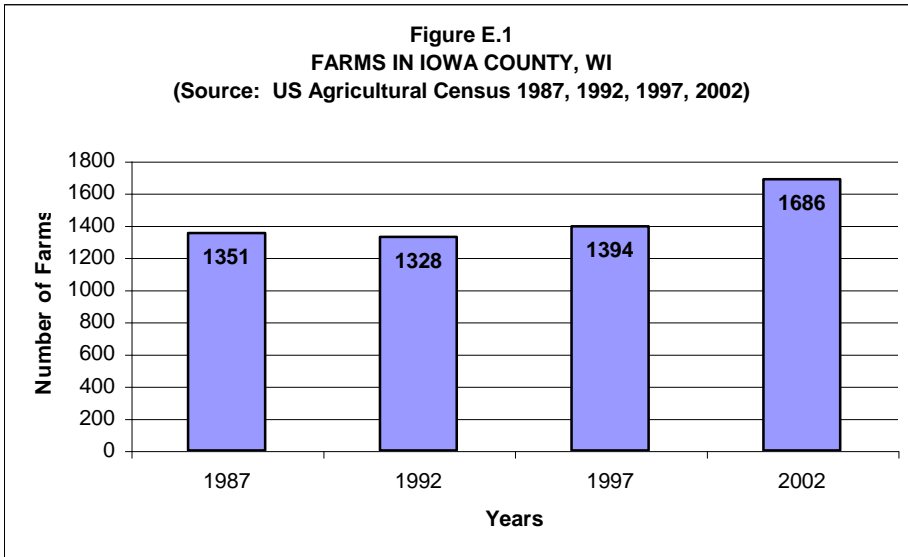


Figure E.2 relates to the number of farms in Iowa County, as it shows the total number of acres in farms. There has been an overall decline in the total number of acres farmed. A contributing factor is the amount of farmland being converted to residential, recreational, or conservation land.

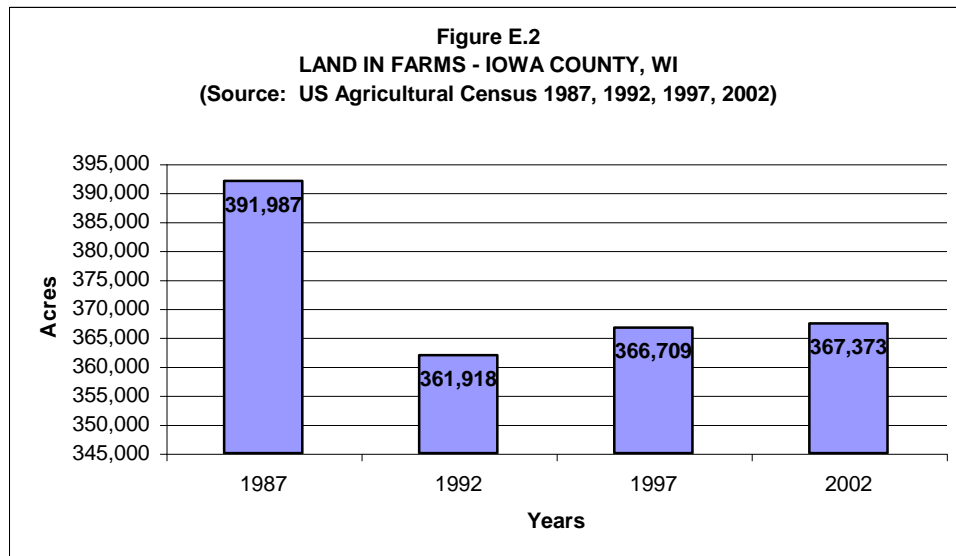


Figure E.3 shows the number of farmland sales and conversion in Iowa County. All towns show changes in sales and conversion but the Town of Eden is the lowest.

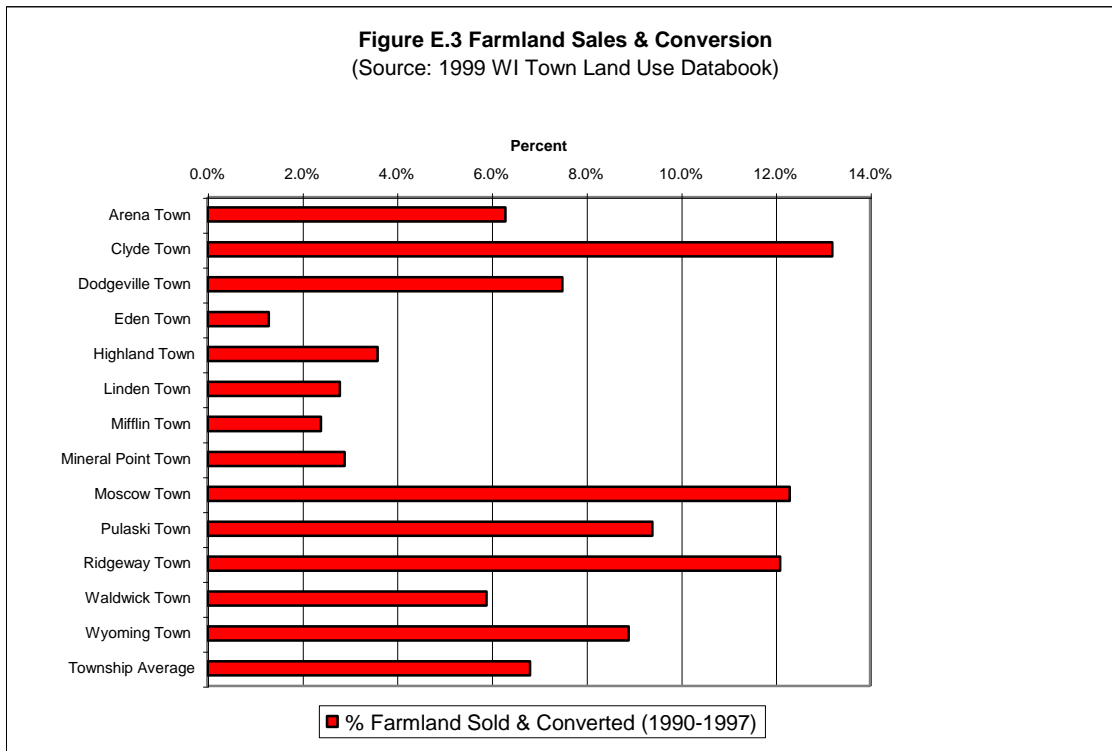


Figure E. 4 shows the average value of sale per acre of land. Most towns are roughly \$950 per acre with the Town of Wyoming an obvious exception.

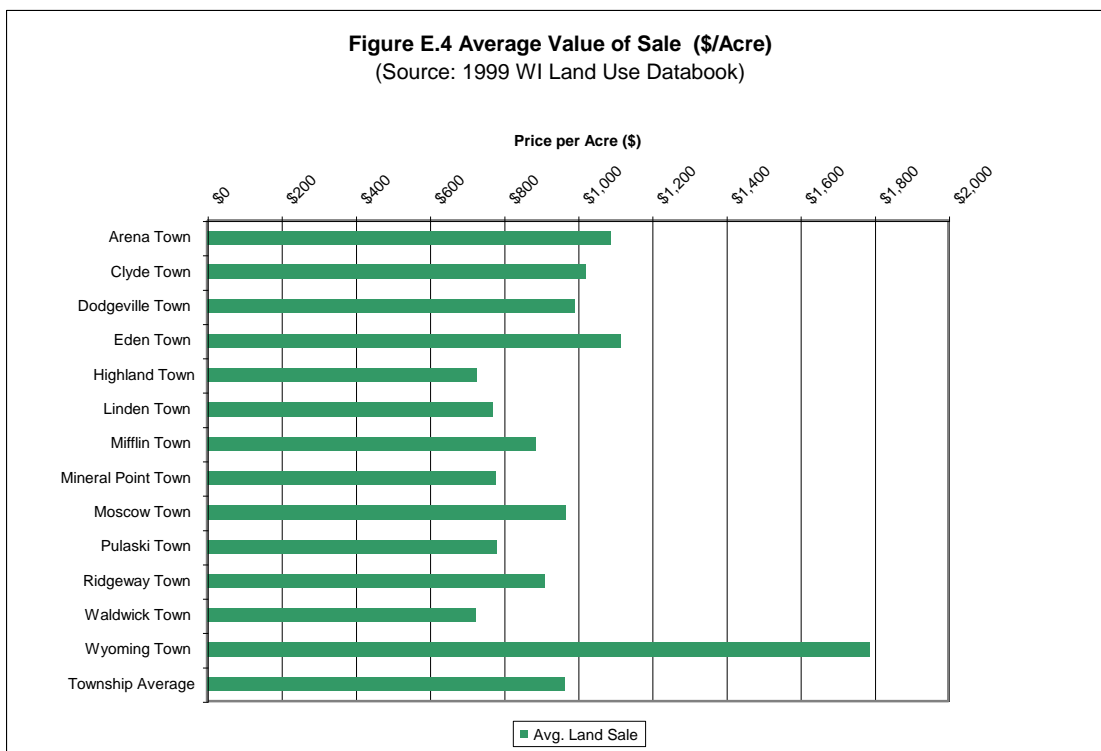
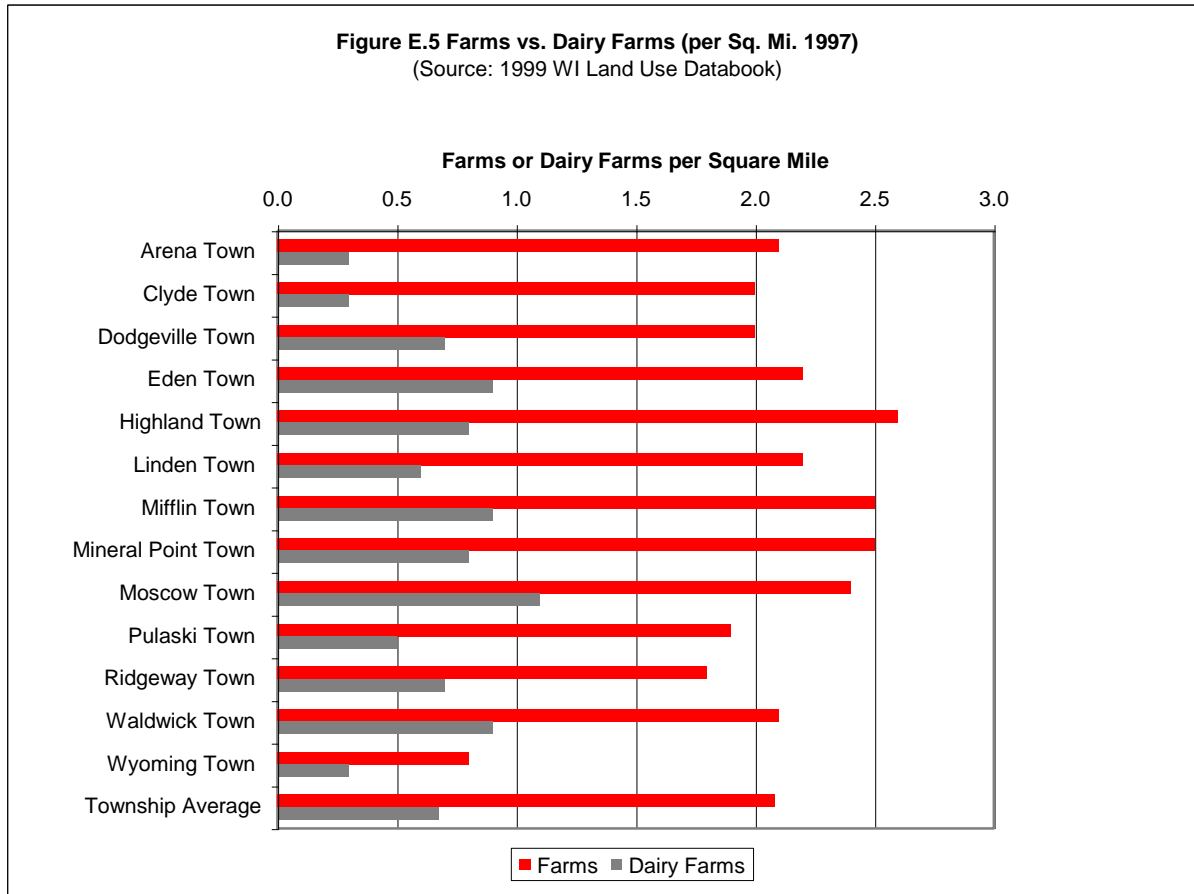


Figure E.5 shows a comparison of farms to dairy farms per square mile in 1997. Non-dairy farms were greater in number than dairy farms in all the towns of Iowa County.



**FARMLAND POTENTIAL**

In Iowa County, 72 percent of the soils are classified as prime, state, and local importance. Map E.1 is a Town level soil classification map. The classifications are

Prime Farmland - Most Capability Group I and II Soils  
(25 percent of soils in Iowa County)

State Importance - Most Capability Group III Soils  
(20 percent of soils in Iowa County)

Local Importance - Varies but in Southwestern Wisconsin some Capability Group IV, V, and VI Soils. In Iowa County these include land with better moisture holding capacity – valuable locally for pasture and hay production.  
(27 percent of soils in Iowa County)

Other - Soil groups of importance (Capability Group VII, VIII) not noted in the categories above.

**LAND COVER**

Map E.2 shows the amount of agricultural resources in the Town of Ridgeway. It also shows the location of natural resources, including forested lands, open water, and wetlands.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

Natural resources are the essence of the natural environment. Whether obvious or not, impacts to sensitive environmental communities and resources often have significant adverse impacts on the human community.

**WATER RESOURCES**

Water is one of the most commonly used natural resources, serving an intrinsic function in the community. People utilize groundwater for drinking water, industrial uses, recreational purposes, etc. on a daily basis. Plants and animals rely on water to survive. Water is also one of the most easily contaminated resources. Because of its mobile nature, contaminants can travel far from their source through the ever-moving water cycle. This type of pervasive pollution is commonly known as non-point source pollution (NPSP).

Non-point source pollution comes from many diffuse sources resulting from a wide variety of human activities. NPSP directly impacts water resources. The Town of Ridgeway actively protects its water resources by recommending catch basins, Ag contour strips, and the creation of small dams, with all construction done according to state regulations.

**SURFACE WATER**

Watercourses and water bodies provide various recreational opportunities, including fishing, swimming, boating, and passive recreational opportunities such as bird watching. Streams provide habitat for aquatic species and other wildlife. The Wisconsin and Pecatonica Rivers and nearby lakes and streams serve recreational needs of area residents. See Map E.3 for surface water resources in the Town of Ridgeway and Map E.4 for Town watersheds. Ridgeway is in two watersheds, the Mill and Blue Mounds Creeks and the Upper East Branch of the Pecatonica River watersheds.

**FLOODPLAINS**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated flood hazard areas along many surface water resources. The importance of respecting floodways and floodplains is critical in terms of planning and development. Ignoring these constraints can cause serious problems relating to property damage and the overall safety of residents. Due to Iowa County being entirely within the Driftless Area, the flood plains are largely the result of a well-developed dendritic (tree branch-like) drainage pattern draining the fairly rugged topography. This, together with low infiltration rates for most of its soils, combines to make overall flood risk in Iowa County quite high, as is true in the Town of Ridgeway. In order to lower flood risk, the Town does not allow building in floodplains, roadway ditches are maintained and culverts are used when necessary. See Map E.5 for the FEMA map.

**WETLANDS**

Wetlands serve a variety of functions, including playing an important role in stormwater management and flood control, filtering pollutants, recharging groundwater, providing a habitat for many wildlife species and plants, and offering open space and passive recreational opportunities. Iowa County wetlands include all marshes and swamps and those areas excluded from cultivation or other use because they are intermittently wet. The steep topography of southwest Wisconsin results in most natural wetlands being closely linked to the region's rivers and streams.

The Wisconsin Wetland Inventory (WWI) was completed for the state in 1985. Pre-European settlement wetland figures estimate the state had about 10 million acres of wetlands. Based on aerial photography from 1978-79, the WWI shows approximately 5.3 million acres of wetlands remaining in the state representing a loss of about 47% of original wetland acreage. This figure does not include wetlands less than 2 or 5 acres in size (minimum mapping unit varies by county). Because the original WWI utilized aerial photographs taken in the summer some wetlands were missed, especially in the northern counties since interpretation was difficult due to leaf cover. Also, wetlands that were farmed as of the date of photography used and then later abandoned due to wet conditions were not captured as part of the WWI. Most wetland losses in Iowa County have likely been due to draining for farming.

The Legislature authorized the DNR to update the WWI on a 10-year cycle. Budget constraints and lack of staff have slowed this process to a 24-year cycle at best. Digitizing wetland maps to obtain accurate wetland acreage information is on a rotation almost twice that long. As a result there is no reliable qualitative and quantitative data about current rates of wetland loss. As a result there is no reliable qualitative and quantitative data about current rates of wetland loss. For more information, go to <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/wetlands/facts.shtml>.)

Ridgeway protects wetland resources by regulating all new driveways to maintain a maximum grade of 10 percent. Road right-of-ways are ditched and controlled for runoff with culverts and vegetated buffers.

## GROUNDWATER

Groundwater is a critical resource, not only because it is used on a daily basis, but also because rivers, streams, and other surface water depends on groundwater for recharge. Groundwater, whether from municipal or private well, supplies all Iowa County residents with drinking water. See Map E.6 for depth to groundwater levels for Ridgeway.

Groundwater can easily become contaminated through non-point source pollution. The Driftless Area is characterized by thin soils over fractured limestone, sandstone, or shale bedrock and it is in this type underlying geology where the potential for groundwater contamination is greatest. The Town only has individual wells and the Plan Commission does not wish to create wellhead protection plans for private wells. The jurisdiction as a whole actively protects its drinking water through policies restricting large feedlots.

Water supply is impacted as communities grow, bringing increased demand to supply groundwater to new homes, businesses, and industries. Increased well pumping can reduce the amount of recharge to surface waters, causing streamflow reduction, loss of springs, and changes in wetland vegetative communities. However, the establishment of a high capacity well in the Town might impact water supply. The Groundwater Bill (2003 Act 310) addresses groundwater quantity issues, requiring approval for siting, fees, and an environmental review. While this legislation is currently more relevant in areas of the state experiencing severe water quantity issues (e.g. the Central Sands region), the principle of controlling groundwater withdrawal in all parts of the state is quite important. By 2006, a groundwater advisory committee will be put together to address groundwater management in

*“...Other areas of the state in which the withdrawal of groundwater over the long term adversely affects the availability of water for use or adversely affects water quality due to the effects of drawdown of the groundwater and in which there is a need for a coordinated response among the state, local government units, regional planning commissions, and public and private users of groundwater to address the effects on groundwater availability or quality.” (2003 Wisconsin Act 310, published May 6, 2004).”*

Currently, increasing water supply demand is not an issue in the Town of Ridgeway.

It is important to keep the groundwater resource in mind for many areas of comprehensive planning. Ultimately, what takes place above ground directly impacts this resource below the surface. There are a number of activities that directly impact the quality of water resources.

Potential pollution sources that can affect the groundwater supply include but are not limited to:

- On-site septic systems
- Sewage Treatment Plants
- Surface Waste Water Discharge
- Sanitary Landfills
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Feedlots
- Junkyards
- Abandoned Quarries
- Abandoned Wells
- Pesticide and Fertilizer Applications
- Road Salt
- Household Cleaners & Detergents
- Unsewered Subdivisions
- Gas Stations
- Chemical Spills
- Leaking Sewer Lines
- Old Mine Openings or Shafts

## WILDLIFE AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Wildlife enriches our lives by providing opportunities for observing or photographing animals in their native habitat. Wildlife serves as an educational stimulus by provoking human curiosity about the natural world.

**Habitat is the combination of food, water, shelter, and space necessary to meet the needs of wildlife.**

Humans have an environmental responsibility to protect wildlife and the habitat it needs to survive. Since wildlife can cause problems by destroying property, carrying disease, producing unsanitary waste, and conflicting with human activities, it is important to provide natural habitat at a distance from human activities where animals will not be in contact with humans and can live and breed without interference.



Savannas, grasslands with a partial canopy of open grown trees, and ridge tops are home to a wide array of wildlife, particularly birds. Savanna, grassy ridge tops, and forest historically covered the hills of southwest Wisconsin. Today, savannas and grassy ridge tops are rare. Descriptions of natural communities in Iowa County are listed in Appendix E-1. Ridgeway is within two ecological landscapes, Southwest Savanna and Western Coulee and Ridge.

To protect its natural areas, the Town of Ridgeway utilizes its Land Use Plan that states that all plans for development in or adjacent to important natural features must be carefully reviewed by the Land Use Commission and Town Board to ensure that existing natural features are preserved whenever possible. The Land Use Plan and the Land Use Commission were created for the purpose of both actively supporting agriculture and preserving wildlife habitat. See Section H, Land Use Element Policies for more information.

The Town does not give financial support to wildlife protection and conservation, but the preservation and maintenance of areas needed to support wildlife shall be encouraged. The Plan Commission has also expressed an interest in learning more about supporting prairie and savanna restoration efforts and groups.

### **THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

The Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 was enacted to conserve threatened and endangered species of wildlife and plants. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has used the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) to develop maps for all counties in the state providing generalized information about rare, threatened and endangered species. Threatened and Endangered plant species are vulnerable to a variety of exotic, invasive plants, such as Bull Thistle and Wild Parsnip. Ridgeway enforces its public nuisance ordinance that specifically addresses noxious weeds, noxious odors, stagnant water areas, and well pollution areas. DNR-NHI maps (Map E.7a and E.7b) have been included at the end of this section for a reference. Also, refer to Appendix E-2 for a list of the Threatened and Endangered plant, animal, and natural communities of the Town of Ridgeway.

### **FOREST RESOURCES**

Forests provide raw materials for the forest products industry and a venue for hunting, hiking, and fishing. They help sustain water resources and provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species. They also help balance global warming effects through oxygen production and carbon sequestration. Over half the forested lands in Wisconsin (57%) are privately owned. See Map E.2 for forested lands in Ridgeway.

### **RURAL FORESTS**

Forty-six percent of Wisconsin is forested (16 million acres). Forests therefore represent one of Wisconsin's most important land uses and are often times a defining feature of communities or whole regions. Other benefits of forests include:

- Recreational opportunities such as hunting, fish, and hiking
- Groundwater protection
- Home for wide variety of plants and animals, including Threatened and Endangered species
- Cleans air by producing oxygen and storing carbon
- Part of Wisconsin's culture

With a stated objective to protect woodlands, the Town of Ridgeway has 3,290 acres in the Forest Crop Managed Forest Law program. The Plan Commission expressed interested in learning more about other sustainable forestry practices as well.

There are no municipal tree-planting programs in place in the Town of Ridgeway, nor is the Plan Commission interested in such programs. However, the Plan Commission does encourage tree planting north of Highway 18/151 within the Town of Ridgeway.

### **URBAN FORESTS**

One natural resource often forgotten is the urban forest. The urban forest does not necessarily only relate to trees, but also includes shrubs, flowers, vines, ground cover, grass, and other plants within an urban area.

The Town does not have any Urban Forest.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS

Environmental corridors refer to areas that contain groupings of natural resource features. Areas of concentrated natural resource activity (“rooms”), such as wetlands, woodlands, prairies, lakes, and other features, become even more functional when linked by environmental corridors (“hallways”). If corridor resource features are placed on a map, they can show a linear space.

Fish and wildlife populations, native plant distribution, and even clean water all depend on movement through environmental corridors. For example, wildlife populations isolated in one wooded location can overpopulate, die out, or cause problems for neighbors if there are not adequate corridors to allow the population to move about freely. Over 70 percent of all terrestrial wildlife species use riparian corridors, according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### Environmental Corridor Benefits:

- Reduced Flooding
- Reduced Soil Erosion
- Improved Water Quality
- Improved Water Quantity
- Groundwater Recharge
- Bank Stabilization
- Improved Air Quality
- Improved Wildlife Habitat

### Social Benefits:

- Walking and Hiking
- Cross Country Skiing
- Horseback Riding
- Photography
- Wildlife Viewing

Map E.8 shows several natural resource features in Ridgeway, which can act as environmental corridors. Preserving environmental corridors can be a highly effective way to protect natural and cultural resources in an area.

## AIR AND LIGHT

The Plan Commission did not identify air or light pollution as issues at this time.

## GEOLOGIC AND SOIL RESOURCES

Soils and geology are also important planning considerations, particularly when thinking about new development. Today, technological advances can overcome many development challenges relating to soil and geology; however, it is important that these resources are not abused, overused, or contaminated. Particular attention must be paid to soils when development is occurring on steeper slopes and for septic systems. Drain-fields must be located to allow adequate infiltration and the sewage treatment provided by soils. A series of maps including slope limitations (Map E.9), septic limitations (Map E.10), and depth to bedrock (Map E.11) have been included.

Southwest Wisconsin is part of the unglaciated region known as the Driftless Area. Most of the bedrock in this region is sedimentary rock, consisting of sandstone and shale or limestone, containing mineral resources. Mineral resources are divided into two categories, metallic and non-metallic. Metallic resources in the region include lead and zinc. Non-metallic resources include sand, gravel, and limestone, with limestone as one of the most significant geologic resources in the area, used frequently for road building. Refer to Map E-12 for a map showing mines and quarries in Iowa County.

Restricting access to abandoned mines or quarries helps protect these areas from becoming source points for groundwater contamination.

There is an active quarry in Ridgeway that is fenced and gated, restricting access. There are no mine pits or diggings in the jurisdiction.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Open space serves many important functions. It protects ecologically sensitive areas including wetlands and water resources, important wildlife habitat, and sensitive soils. Open space plays an important role in shaping the character of the community, as nothing can replace the visual impact of vast open space, whether it is agricultural land or woodlands. Preserving open spaces not only directly protects resources, but the space becomes a vital buffer zone. Open space can take the form of parks, cropland and pastures, greenbelts, wetlands or floodplains. Open space can also serve many functions for a community other than recreation, such as the following:

- Flood management
- Preserving prime agricultural land
- Limiting development that may occur
- Buffering incompatible land uses
- Structuring the community environment

### LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Parks can serve a limited neighborhood area, a portion of the community, or the entire community or region and provide area and facilities for outdoor recreation for residents and visitors.

The Town of Ridgeway offers a variety of recreational amenities to recreational users and visitors including:

- Snowmobile trails
- Bike trails
- Campgrounds
- Hyde Mill and Dam that attracts many tourists
- DNR land that is open to hunters and bird watchers
- Many fishing streams
- Folklore Village that attracts thousands of tourists and classes

Ridgeway is also near Blue Mounds and Governor Dodge State Parks. Refer to Map E.13 for Iowa County parks.

The Town does not actively promote its natural resources to recreational visitors. Nor does the Plan Commission see a need for additional parks, trails, or other outdoor recreation spaces in the Town.

### CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Many communities often ignore cultural and historic resources in order to deal with “real” issues facing their community. However, the proper appreciation of these assets is vital to the long-term success of a community. Respecting and utilizing these available resources increases the overall quality of life and provides opportunities for tourism.

Determining what are cultural and historic resources has been left open to some interpretation. For the purpose of this report, historic resources include historic buildings and sites (as identified by the national register of historic places), museums, churches, cemeteries, old country schools, and other buildings deemed appropriate by the community. The information presented here is to serve as a guide to cultural and historic resources but is not inclusive.

### HISTORIC PLACES

Ridgeway has two sites listed on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places. Refer to Map E.14 for historic places in the Town of Ridgeway.

**Table E.1- National Register of Historic Places**

Name and Type of Place	Location	Date Added to State Register	Date Added to National Register
Plum Grove Primitive Methodist Church	County Road BB	1/20/95	4/27/95
Hyde Chapel	County Hwy T	1/1/89	10/13/88

### CHURCHES

Churches have had a significant impact on the culture of the Town of Ridgeway area. Refer to Map E.15 for churches in Ridgeway.

Places of worship in the Town include:

- Hyde Chapel – Nondenominational Association
- Plum Grove Primitive Methodist Church (moved to Folklore; may not be active church/no services)

### CEMETERIES

Also identified as a prominent historic and cultural resource are the area cemeteries. Cemeteries can provide an historic perspective of the area, giving names and ethnicities of previous residents. Refer to Map E.15 for cemeteries in the Town of Ridgeway.

The following cemeteries serve the Town of Ridgeway:

- Hyde
- Ebenezer – Eastside
- Ruggles
- Hickox – Ridgeway Village
- St. Bridget's

**RURAL SCHOOLS**

The old time, one room schoolhouse once dotted the landscape, providing public education for mainly rural communities. Over time, these buildings were utilized less and less, as larger, more centrally located schools were built and students were bused in from the country. Nevertheless, the one room schoolhouse remains an icon of American rural culture, representing the opportunity for all children to learn “the three R’s”: reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic. Refer to Map E.14 for rural school buildings in the Town of Ridgeway.

The following rural school buildings (some of which have been converted to other uses) are in the Town of Ridgeway:

- Wakefield
- Ruggles
- Pikes Peak
- Blue Grass Valley
- Yagers Corner
- Weier

**OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES IN THE TOWN OF RIDGEWAY**

The Plan Commission identified three other historic sites in the Town. Refer to Map E.14 for other historic buildings and sites in Ridgeway.

- Folklore Village (County B) – Folk Art Center
- Hyde Blacksmith Shop (County H) – Being reconstructed
- Ruggles Farm (County H) – Old stagecoach stop

**CULTURAL RESOURCE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Town of Ridgeway supports the Hyde Blacksmith shop restoration, the Ridgeway Pines Area, and the Folklore Village Folk Art Festival.

Ridgeway’s most important cultural resources and the threats to them are listed on Table E.2.

**Table E.2 - Cultural Resources Most Important To Your Community**

Cultural Resource	Threats
Hyde Mill	Neglect

**RESPONSE TO THREATS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

The Town of Ridgeway established the Hyde Historical Preservation Committee to address the preservation of Hyde Mill.

**ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

About 10,000 years ago, **Paleo-Indians** entered Wisconsin as they hunted woolly mammoth, mastodon, and bison. These large mammals lived on the abundant vegetation beginning to grow as the glaciers retreated northward.

Around 8,000 years ago, during the **Archaic Period**, the climate became warmer and dryer. Animals found in the state today replaced the large Ice Age mammals. People lived in smaller family groups in caves, rockshelters, along rivers, and around lakes and wetlands. They harvested wild plants, nuts, and acorns. They hunted animals such as deer and elk.

About 3,000 years ago, during the **Woodland Period**, people lived in large villages and began to use bows and arrows to hunt. It was during this period that many mounds, including effigies or mounds built in the shape of turtles, birds, bears and other animals, were built throughout Wisconsin. These people were Wisconsin’s first potters and gardeners.

The **Mississippian Period** began about 1,000 years ago. In Wisconsin these people are called **Oneota**. They lived in villages and planted gardens to grow crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They had a complex trade network that extended to both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

Jean Nicolet, a French explorer, arrived in Wisconsin in 1634. At that time, the Indian tribes present in the state included the Ho Chunk (Winnebago), Potawatomi, Menominee, and Ojibwa (Chippewa) Indians. This marked the beginning of the **Historic Period**.

The table below gives archeological sites documented in your community. This is not a complete list because some sites disappear due to development or agriculture and some may not yet been reported to the State Historical Society.

**Table E.3 - Archeological Sites In Your Community\***

Site/Code Name	Site Type	Cultural Significance
Ley Creek	Campsite/village	Unknown Prehistoric
Ted Sawle	Workshop site, Campsite/village	Late Archaic, Late Woodland
Butteris #1	Cave/rockshelter	Unknown Prehistoric
Walnut Orchard Site	Campsite/village	Late Archaic
Hyde Campsite	Campsite/village	Late Woodland
McCutchen	Campsite/village	Middle Woodland
Parks Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Late Woodland
Hyde-aka Mill Creek Church Cem.	Cemetery/burial	Historic Euro/American
St. Bridget's Cemetery	Cemetery/burial	Historic Euro/American
Eastside Cemetery	Cemetery/burial	Historic Euro/American
Unnamed Cemetery	Cemetery/burial	Historic Euro/American
Ruggles Cemetery	Cemetery/burial	Historic Euro/American
Paull Rockshelter	Campsite/village, Cave rockshelter	Woodland
Last Chance Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Late Woodland
Jawbone Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Unknown Prehistoric
Outlook Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Woodland
Brown Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Woodland
Double Chamber Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	Unknown Prehistoric
Biface Rockshelter	Cave/rockshelter	L.Arch., L. Wldd., Mid. Wldd.
Unnamed Cemetery	Cemetery/burial	
Owl Rockshelter	Rock art	Unknown Prehistoric
Fern Rockshelter	Rock art	Unknown Prehistoric
Ridge Pitts	Quarry/mine	Historic Euro/American
BB Lead Pits	Quarry/mine	Historic Euro/American
Folklore Diggings	Quarry/mine	Historic Euro/American

\*Due to the delicate nature of archeological sites, the Wisconsin State Historical Society does not release specific locations.

The Plan Commission identified local cultural resource contacts on Table E.4.

**Table E.4 - Cultural Resource Contacts In The Town Of Ridgeway**

Name	Program/Affiliation	Area of Historical Expertise
Volunteer community groups to support preservation		

#### **HISTORIC ORDINANCE**

Ridgeway does not have an historic preservation ordinance and does not wish to create one at this time.

**AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCE AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS**

There are a number of available state and federal programs to assist with agricultural, natural, and cultural resource planning and protection. Below are brief descriptions of various agencies and programs. Contact information has been provided for each agency. To find out more specific information or which program best fits your needs contact them directly.

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (WI-DNR)**

The Department of Natural Resources is dedicated to the preservation, protection, effective management, and maintenance of Wisconsin's natural resources. It is responsible for implementing the laws of the state and, where applicable, the laws of the federal government that protect and enhance the natural resources of our state. It is the one agency charged with full responsibility for coordinating the many disciplines and programs necessary to provide a clean environment and a full range of outdoor recreational opportunities for Wisconsin citizens and visitors. The Wisconsin DNR has a number of programs available ranging from threatened and endangered species to water quality to parks and open space to wetlands.

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (WI-DNR)**

101 S Webster St  
Madison WI 53703

Phone: 608-266-2621  
Fax: 608-261-4380

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us>

The Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (CFA) administers grant and loan programs, under the WI-DNR. Financial program staff works closely with local governments and interested groups to develop and support projects that protect public health and the environment, and provide recreational opportunities.

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)**

The Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer Protection inspects and licenses more than 100,000 businesses and individuals, analyzes millions of laboratory samples, conducts hundreds of hearings and investigations, educates businesses and consumers about best practices, adopts rules that have the force of law, and promotes Wisconsin agriculture at home and abroad.

Specifically DATCP has two divisions that relate directly to the agriculture and natural resource section of the comprehensive plan. The Environmental Division focuses on insects, land and water, as well as plants and animals. The Agricultural Division focuses on animals, crops, agricultural resources, and land and water resources.

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)**

2811 Agriculture Drive  
PO Box 8911  
Madison WI 53708

Phone: 608-224-4960

<http://www.datcp.state.wi.us>

**WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is the federal agency that works with landowners on private lands to conserve natural resources. NRCS is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was formerly called the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

Nearly three-fourths of the technical assistance provided by the agency goes to helping farmers and ranchers develop conservation systems uniquely suited to their land and individual ways of doing business. The agency also provides assistance to other private landowners and rural and urban communities to reduce erosion, conserve and protect water, and solve other resource problems.

**WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

6515 Watts Road,  
Suite 200  
Madison, WI 53719

Phone (608) 276-USDA

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov>

**WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society serves as the archives of the State of Wisconsin. It collects books, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, relics, newspapers, and audio and graphic materials as they relate to North America. It maintains a museum, library, and research facility in Madison, as well as a statewide system of historic sites, school services, area research centers, administering a broad program of historic preservation and publishing a wide variety of historical materials, both scholarly and popular. The historical society can also provide assistance for various state and federal programs.

**WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Office of Preservation Planning  
Division of Historic Preservation**

**Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706**

**Phone: 608-264-6500**

**<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>**