

# Goals and Strategies

## Introduction

The next step in the planning process is to determine appropriate actions to manage and maintain the green infrastructure network in Presque Isle County. The steering committee completed an exercise to identify opportunities and threats for protecting the natural resources in the County (See Appendix C). Next, the committee established goals and strategies. It is important to note, while the primary focus of this plan is on the Green Infrastructure hubs, links and sites, the concepts and approaches should be used when managing natural resources across the entire county.

## Goals and Strategies

### **GOAL 1: Educate and inform landowners, businesses and local officials on the importance of Green Infrastructure.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Publicize the Green Infrastructure Plan to heighten public awareness, especially that of elected officials. Provide information regarding the reasons for identifying potential natural areas, including a listing of natural communities and rare and common species found in each area (excepting species that may be sensitive to collection or harassment).
- Take the plan to governmental bodies for consideration and possible adoption.
- Solicit participation and endorsement of similar minded groups and organizations.
- Draft brochures describing Green Infrastructure, purpose, benefits and countywide effort.
- Apply to DEQ Coastal Management Program and other funding agencies for grant funding to develop interpretive displays and educational campaigns with the goal of increasing local stewardship of coastal and inland resources and water quality.
- Develop education programs for landowners. Provide information on the protection of habitat and ecological corridors that support wildlife, particularly threatened and/or endangered species; preservation and management of plant communities that provide critical habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species; karst sensitivity; and proper timber management, harvesting and reforestation.
- Develop educational programs for developers and real estate companies. Educational efforts should provide information on topics such as protecting water quality, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, karst sensitivity and wildlife habitat. Workshops should also have a field trip component.
- Sponsor local landowner workshops that focus on water quality, woodlands, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, karst sensitivity and wildlife habitat. Workshops should also have a field trip component.
- Develop an educational component to increase public awareness about causes of and methods to prevent the spread of invasive species.
- Develop education programs in K-12 and Lifelong (adult) classes.

**GOAL 2: Maintain and improve access to nature for all citizens.**

**Strategies:**

- Expand and improve access to inland and coastal resources within existing parks; and where appropriate expand parks and protected areas.
- Encourage DNR PRD to address Presque Isle Green Infrastructure plan in their Thompson's Harbor State Park and Rockport planning process.
- Apply to DEQ Coastal Management Program for grant funding to support development of management plans and habitat restoration plans for coastal parks and preserves in state, local, or nonprofit ownership.
- Apply to DEQ Coastal Management Program for grant funding to support on-the-ground habitat management/restoration for coastal lands in state or local ownership.
- Incorporate the Presque Isle Green Infrastructure plan into the state's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) plan. This will enable communities to seek CELCP funding for public acquisition of coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values. Lands that have significant ecological value hold the highest priority for protection. Lands or types of lands eligible for acquisition should be identified in state's CELCP plan. Grant program administered by Coastal Management Program, DEQ. NOAA is source of funds.

**GOAL 3: Manage and protect identified Green Infrastructure hubs, links and sites.**

**GOAL 4: Preserve working landscapes including farms and forests.**

**Strategies:**

- Identify priorities for conservation among potential natural areas with respect to conservation of locally and regionally important natural communities and native species
- Support continued efforts to document presence of threatened and endangered species and communities and develop strategies to conserve those finite resources. Seek funding to support additional surveys/inventories for rare species and communities; and other studies/research that would improve state or local management of coastal resources and water quality. For areas within the coastal zone apply to DEQ Coastal Management Program for grant funding.
- Utilize existing state and federal programs such as Wetlands Reserve Program (conservation easements & restoration); Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (Program (cost-share & incentive payments for conservation); Conservation Reserve Program (annual payments to qualified farms for conservation habitat); Conservation Security Program (direct payments to farmers that do conservation); Environmental Quality Incentive Program (cost-share & incentive payments for conservation) and Partners for Wildlife Program (USFWS for habitat restoration).
- Use the Presque Isle Green Infrastructure plan to identify private unprotected lands with important ecological and conservation values, and target them for protection (outright acquisition, acquisition of conservation easements, and work with private landowners to manage or restore habitat)
- Establish a targeted landowner assistance program in the Green Infrastructure hubs, links and sites. There are a number of existing landowner assistance programs through the DNR, Conservation District, NRCS, Forest Stewardship, USFWS, and FLEP. This plan recommends working cooperatively with agencies to secure funding and to provide technical assistance to landowners. The approach is to first compile a listing of targeted

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landowners through the Presque Isle County Equalization Office. Next, the targeted landowner mailing list will be used for a direct mailing to offer technical assistance and develop resource stewardship plans for interested landowners.

- Use the same list developed for the landowner technical assistance and education program to inform landowners on the benefits of conservation easements and habitat easements.
- Along with development of resource stewardship plans, technical assistance should be provided to assist landowners in implementing their plan and where appropriate, applying for resource project cost-sharing money.
- Distribute educational materials to landowners. Where possible use existing brochures and educational materials. Information should include forest management, timber harvesting, wildlife, fisheries, threatened and endangered species, invasive species, tree planting, Best Management Practices (BMP's), and cost sharing programs.
- Demonstration Projects – Identify and work with interested landowners to complete projects for greenbelt re-establishment, wildlife habitat management, habitat restoration, critical habitat preservation and forest management. These demonstration projects could be funded with cost-sharing grants. With landowner permission, sites could be used for outdoor workshops. To promote the successes, draft articles for local newspapers about the demonstration projects.
- Hold forest and wildlife management workshops in the community. The landowner mailing list developed for the distribution of educational materials should be used to send a personal invitation to key landowners. The workshops should be advertised to draw in landowners from other areas.
- Organize a field tour to highlight environmentally sensitive sites, special plant communities, degraded sites and forest management and wildlife management activities.
- Establish power line/greenbelt initiatives.
- Encourage DNR FMFMD to address Presque Isle Green Infrastructure plan in their state forest compartment review process.
- Address issue related to ownership structure of hunt camps, survivorship or last man standing that results in the eventual sale and possibly splitting of large tracts.
- Encourage the use of native plants for reforestation, wildlife habitat, street and neighborhood trees, landscaping, parks and roadside corridors.
- Enhance the compatibility of forest management activities with conservation of natural ecological systems through promotion of BMPs, establishment of conservation easements, and certification of any commercially managed forestlands.

### **GOAL 5: Encourage communities to retain their identity and plan for sustainable development, employment and natural resource protection.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Develop a process for incorporating areas identified as priorities for conservation into local and regional planning and zoning.
- Work towards having consistent environmental zoning standards in all communities in the county.
- Update communities' land use plans in the county to incorporate the Presque Isle Green Infrastructure plan. A subsequent accessory goal would be to revise communities' zoning ordinances to reflect the Presque Isle Green Infrastructure-related updates to the land use plans. Coastal communities can apply to DEQ Coastal Management Program for grant funding to support land use plan and zoning ordinance updates that emphasize coastal resource and water quality protection.

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- Continue to update zoning ordinances to address environmental issues such as establishing environmental conservation zoning districts, conservation setbacks in zoning districts and greenbelt setbacks in commercial and industrial zoning districts.
- Recommend activities that are compatible with conservation of the potential natural areas and suggestions for municipalities to capitalize on natural areas in their jurisdiction.
- Hold a “Filling the Gaps” seminar for local officials to provide information on local government’s important role in environmental protection. The effort should target local entities responsible for planning and zoning, and include both planning commissions, zoning boards of appeals and governing bodies.
- Distribute to planning commissions: handouts and model ordinance language covering special areas overlay zones, environmental assessment requirements, fees for professional reviews, sensitive areas protection, PUD/cluster development, conservation cluster residential development, site plan review, shoreline protection provisions, recommended setback distances, storm water management guidelines, greenbelt provision language, groundwater protection standards and coordinated permit review and approval procedures would be provided.
- Local planning and zoning are the primary tools communities can use to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, and to conserve natural resources and energy. Amending the zoning ordinance to streamline the process for conservation cluster residential development will slow fragmentation of the large tract forest resources.
- Within developed portions of the county, recognize the importance of green corridors that bring nature into the communities. Maintain and where appropriate expand these corridors. A prime example is the Trout River and lakeshore parks in Rogers City.
- Host roundtable gatherings of local officials to discuss the relationship of resource planning and land use planning.

### **GOAL 6: Provide a framework for implementing and evaluating the success of the Green Infrastructure Plan.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Identify local government entities, organizations and agencies that will take responsibility for implementing the Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Continually develop up to date maps and analysis of natural resources and potential development impacts utilizing existing and improved geo-referenced resource information with GIS capabilities. Integrate these capabilities with county data such as tax parcel layer.
- Utilize these maps and detailed information to assist public officials in understanding, analysis and decision making process for the future that more fully incorporates the best use natural resource management in the future.
- Develop partnerships to connect existing protected areas along the shoreline and inland areas to expand land protection strategies (acquisition, easements and management agreements).
- Develop a network for detecting and eradicating invasive species.
- Explore approaches for increasing conservation capacity in the County and northeast region generally by developing partnerships to identify shared priorities and pursue funding opportunities.