

**Wisconsin  
Coastal and Estuarine  
Land Conservation Plan**

**Wisconsin Department of Administration  
Wisconsin Coastal Management Program**

**October 2011**

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WISCONSIN COASTAL  
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Wisconsin Coastal Management Program  
Division of Intergovernmental Relations  
Wisconsin Department of Administration  
PO Box 8944  
Madison, WI 53708-8944

<http://coastal.wisconsin.gov>

Questions may be directed to Travis Olson, Wetland Protection and Land Use Planning Coordinator  
(608) 266-3687

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## I. Introduction

The “Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009” (Public Law 111-11) amended the Coastal Zone Management Act to re-authorize the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program “for the purposes of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state to other uses or could be managed or restored to effectively conserve, enhance, or restore ecological function.”

A Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan (CELC Plan) must be developed by each coastal state in order to participate in the program. The CELC Plan provides an assessment of priority land conservation needs and clear guidance for nominating and selecting land conservation projects within the state. NOAA guidance describes the priorities for the national Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), and the Wisconsin CELC Plan is intended to be consistent with these national priorities.

The selection of Wisconsin projects for the CELCP is designed to be an open, competitive process structured to guide the development of land conservation projects that will include significant and high priority coastal and estuarine resources. A project evaluation process will be used to select projects for nomination to NOAA for CELCP funding. An open and clear evaluation system will encourage submission of significant and high quality projects that will compete successfully at the national level.

The development of the Wisconsin CELC Plan will be complementary to and compatible with conservation efforts like the Land Legacy Report, the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan, The Nature Conservancy’s Conservation Blueprint for the Great Lakes/Bioregional Plans, and the Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin.

## II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

### A. Geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas.

*Federal Guidance: In this section, define the geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas within your state for the purposes of the CELC Program. The state may choose an area based on the coastal watershed boundary or coastal zone boundary, or may choose another boundary as long as it is within the outermost extent of the watershed or coastal zone boundary.*

For the purposes of the CELCP, 'coastal and estuarine areas' are defined by Federal guidelines as:

"Those areas within a coastal state that are: part of the state's coastal zone, as designated in the state's federally approved coastal management program under the CZMA or within the state's coastal watershed boundary as described in NOAA's Coastal Zone Boundary Review (October 1992). The coastal watershed boundary is defined: for estuarine drainage areas by the inland boundary of those 8-digit USGS hydrologic cataloguing units that contain the head of tide, and; for the Great Lakes region or those portions of watersheds along the marine coast that drain directly to marine waters by those cataloguing units that are located adjacent to the coast."

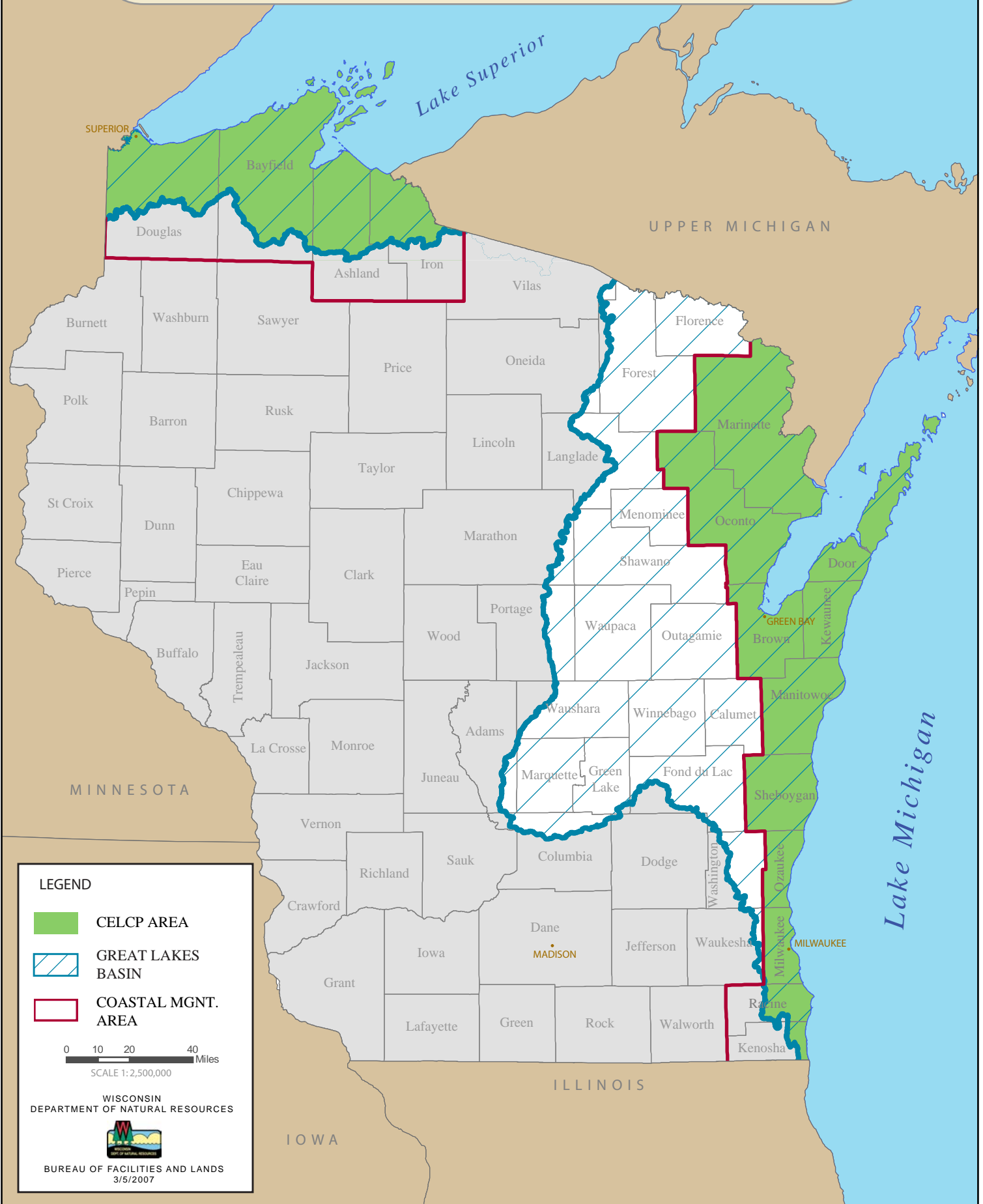
Wisconsin's Coastal Management Program (WCMP) designates a coastal zone extending to "the inland boundary of the 15 counties with frontage on Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, or Green Bay." Federal guidelines enable states to further refine the geographic extent of areas included in the CELCP as deemed appropriate.

In Wisconsin, the watershed boundary for Lake Superior is relatively narrow and is rarely more than 25 miles from the lake. Lake Michigan's watershed boundary in Wisconsin is quite different. In the southern part of the state the watershed is very limited (less than 3 miles from the lake at the state line); in the northern part of the state it is very broad (reaching over 80 miles from the lake near Michigan's Upper Peninsula). Although lands distant from the lakes may influence them to some degree, it is the intent of the Wisconsin CELC Program to focus on lands that directly affect the coastal environment and the biological and ecological resources of Lakes Michigan and Superior. As a result, the geographic extent for the Wisconsin CELC Plan, subsequently referred to in this document as the "**Coastal Area (CA)**," is defined as:




*Lands draining into Lakes Michigan or Superior **and** within the counties bordering Lakes Michigan or Superior (see map 1).*

# Wisconsin Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

## MAP 1: CELCP AREA



### LEGEND

-  CELCP AREA
-  GREAT LAKES BASIN
-  COASTAL MGNT. AREA

0 10 20 40 Miles  
SCALE 1:2,500,000

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3/5/2007

**B. Types of lands or values to be protected through the CELC program and the need for conservation of these values.**

*Federal Guidance: In this section, provide an assessment of priority coastal and estuarine conservation needs within the state and threats to those values that should be avoided. This describes the context for how project areas will be identified.*

**Assessment of Need for Conservation**

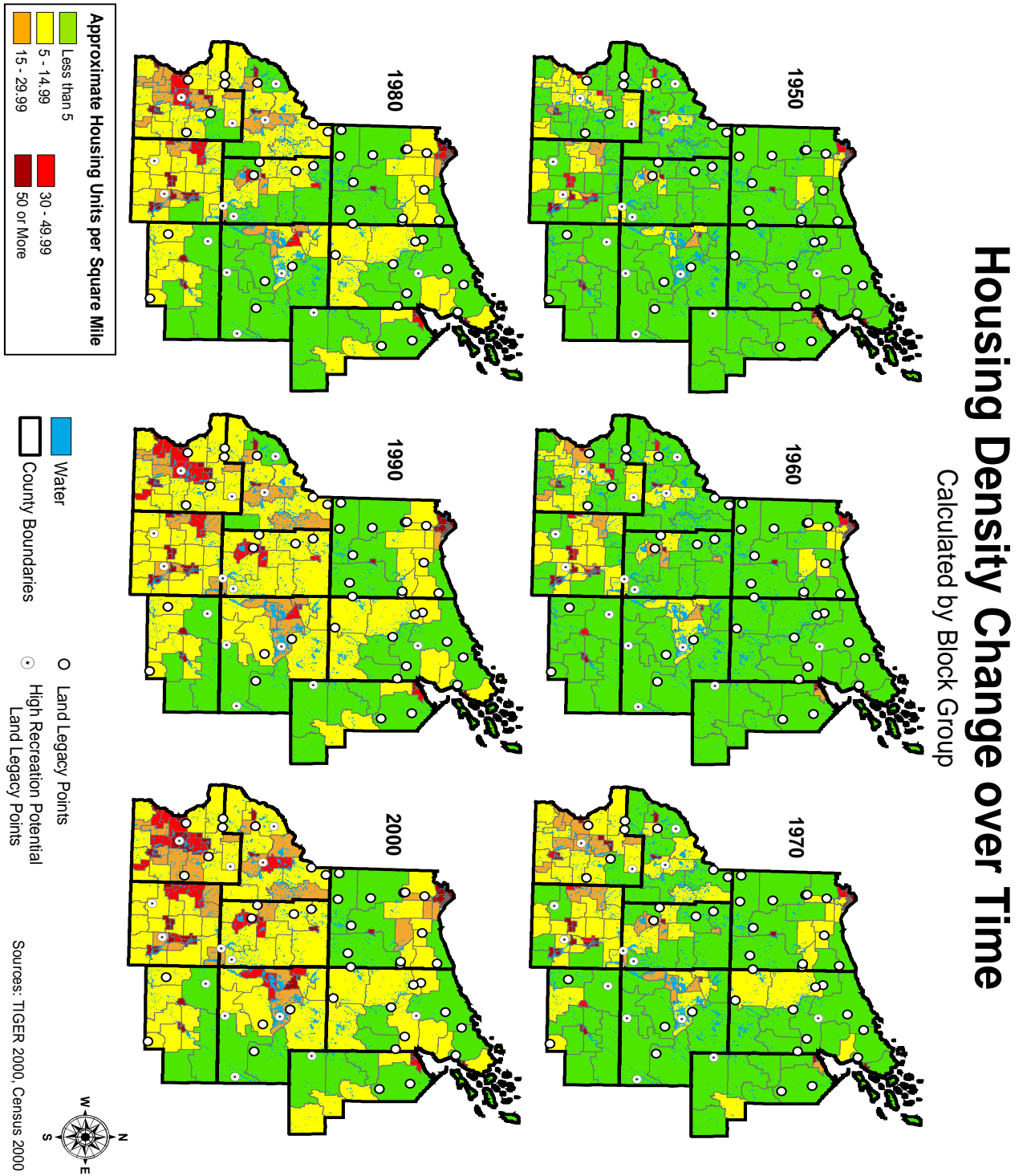
As is the case nationally, coastal areas in Wisconsin are subject to demographic and economic trends that result in threats to coastal habitats and species, as well as to access to public recreation opportunities. Population growth and demographic changes in cities on the Great Lakes drives continued residential and commercial development on the coast and throughout coastal watersheds, reducing the number and acreage of natural areas. Other parts of the coast, such as the Door Peninsula on northern Lake Michigan, and the Bayfield Peninsula on Lake Superior, are tourism centers and are home to increasing second-home and vacation lodging developments. Few areas of the Great Lakes coasts remain in large parcels of forest or agricultural land that retain some value as contiguous natural habitat. These areas are also the last places available for potential protection for public recreation and access to the Great Lakes.

The development and demographic trends are illustrated in the 2005-2010 Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP includes demographic profiles of the three Wisconsin coastal regions, and illustrates current, historical, and future trends in population and housing. The following maps of housing density (Figures 1 – 4) developed for the SCORP are especially useful for illustrating the proximity of development to areas identified as conservation priorities in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and the Land Legacy Report.



# Historical Perspective

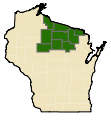
Figure 1



Applied Population Lab and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

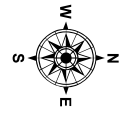
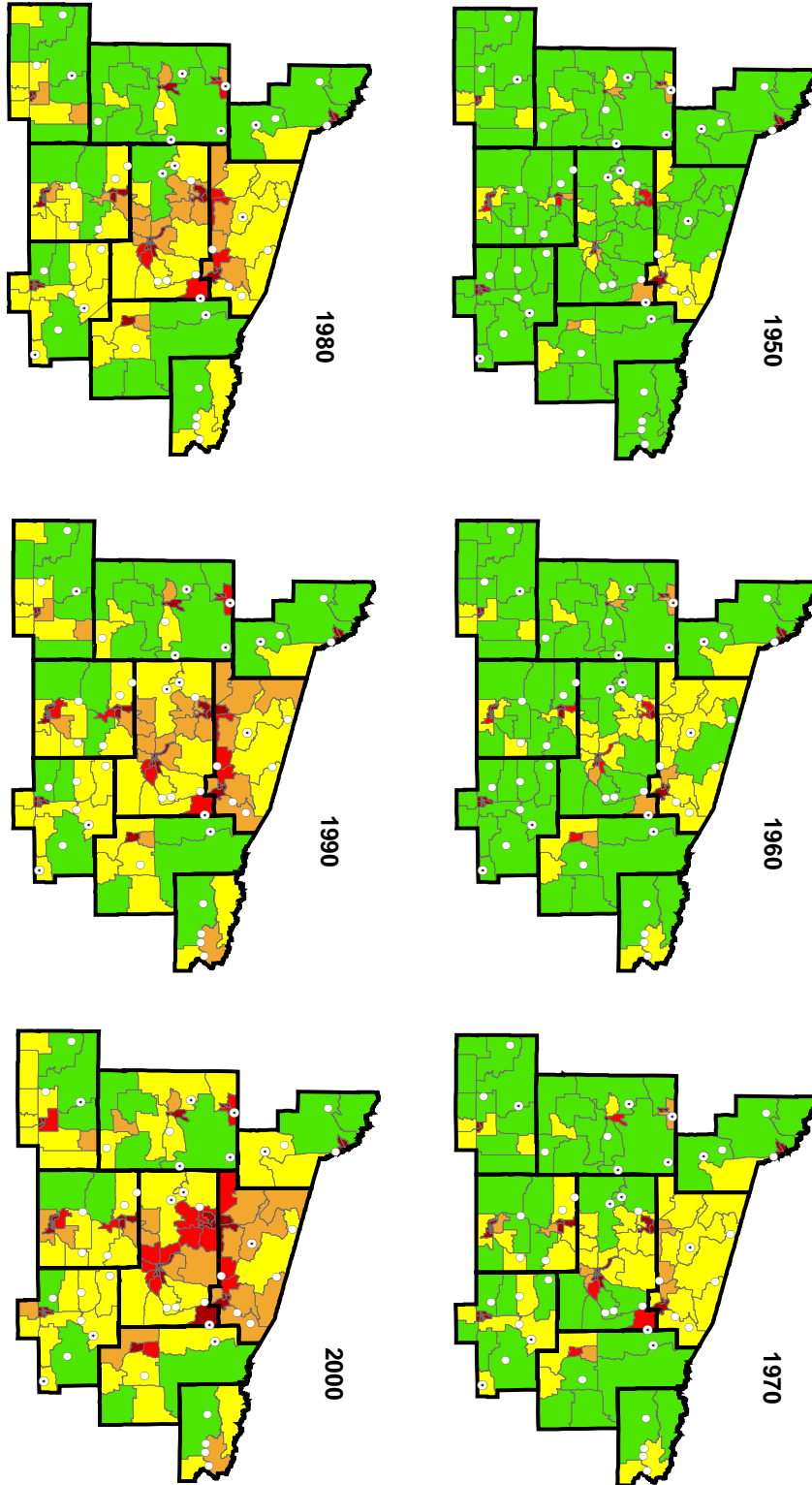
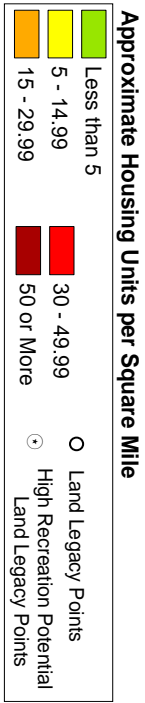
Contact: Richelle Winkler, Applied Population Lab, [rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Jeff Prey, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, [Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us)





# Historical Perspective

Figure 2



## Housing Density Change over Time

Calculated by Block Group

Source: TIGER 2000, Census 2000



Applied Population Lab and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

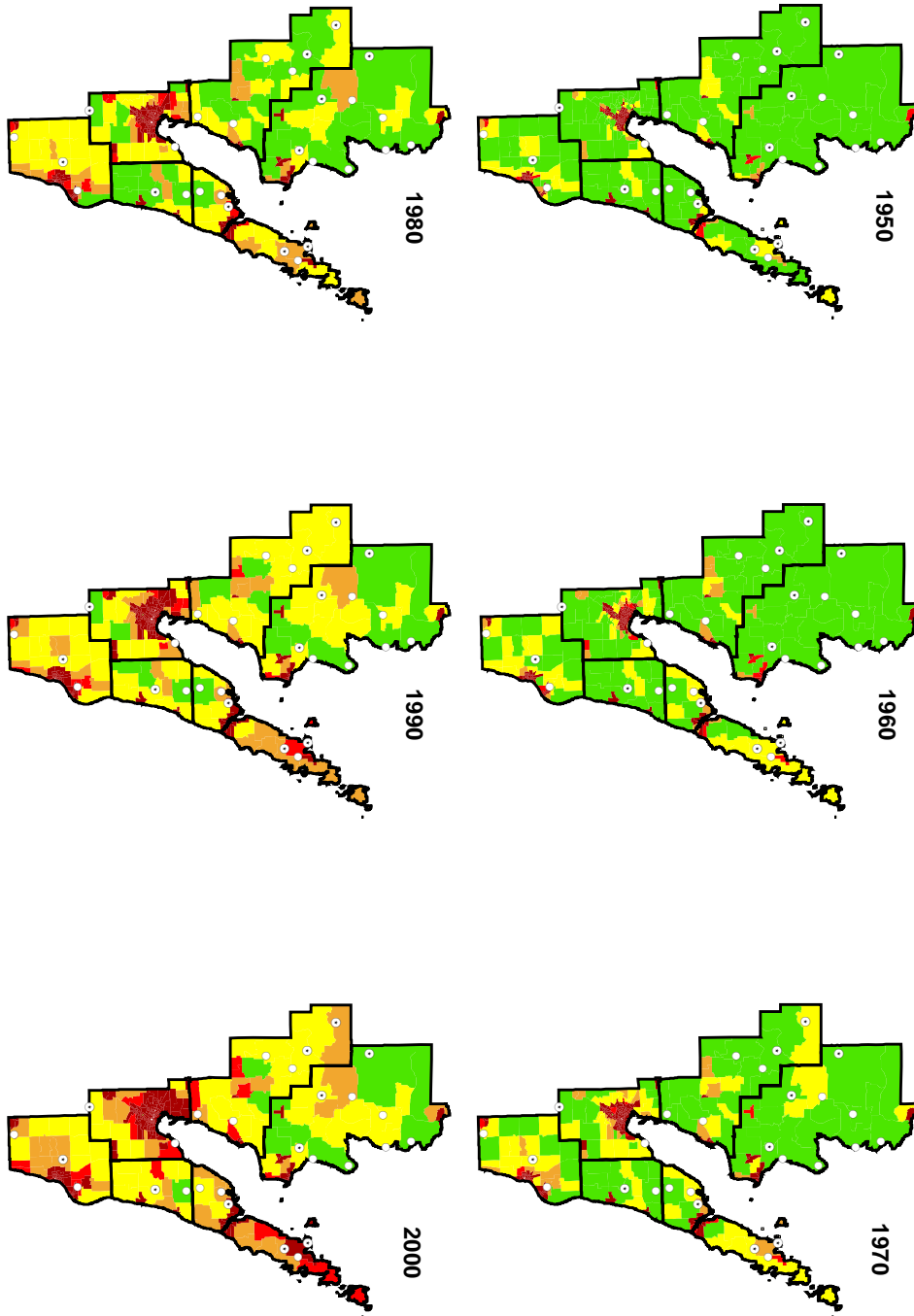
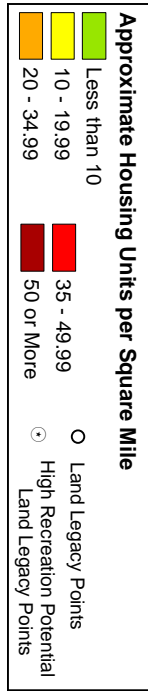
Contact: Richelle Winkler, Applied Population Lab, [rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Jeff Prey, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, [Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us)





# Historical Perspective

Figure 3



## Housing Density Change over Time Calculated by Block Group

Sources: TIGER 2000, Census 2000



Applied Population Lab and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Contact: Richelle Winkler, Applied Population Lab, [rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Jeff Prey, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, [Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us)



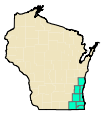
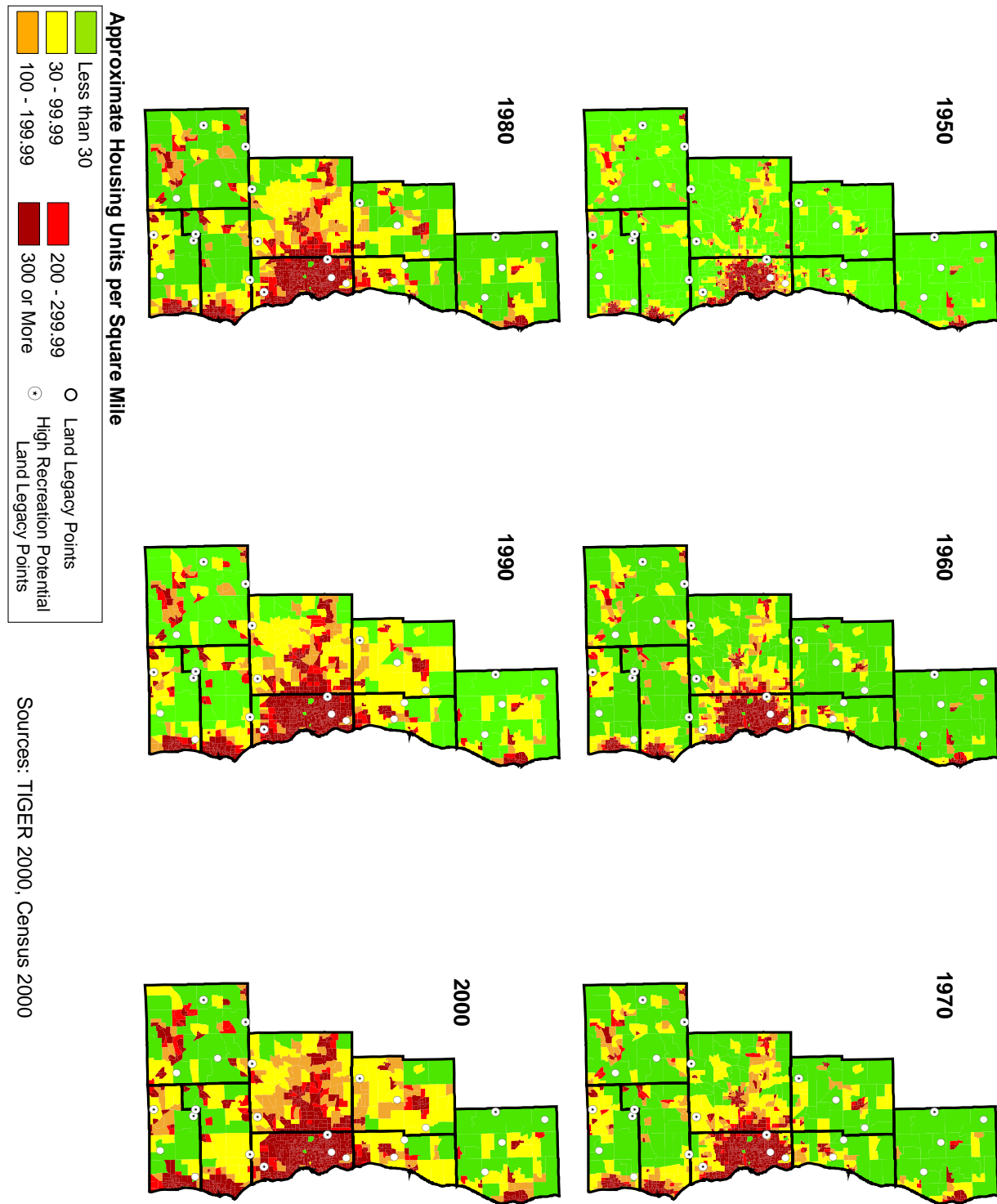


Figure 4



Applied Population Lab and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Contact: Richelle Winkler, Applied Population Lab, [rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:rwinkler@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Jeff Prey, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, [Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Jeff.Prey@dnr.state.wi.us)





## Coastal and Estuarine Conservation Needs and Values

The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) provides a starting point for identifying the state's coastal and estuarine conservation needs and values. The WCMP's "program document" (Wisconsin Coastal Management Program: A Strategic Vision for the Great Lakes) describes Special Coastal Areas which are priorities for protection and management through the WCMP. These areas are not listed individually; rather they are referenced as a class of areas, including "natural areas (Sec. 23.092, Wis. Stats.), scientific areas (Sec. 23.092), wetlands of five or more acres in size (Sec. 23.32), and other environmentally sensitive areas identified in area-wide water quality management plans (Sec. 283.83). This category also covers historic sites (Sec. 44, sub. II) and recreational areas, including forests (Secs. 28.03 and 28.10), parks (Secs. 27.01, 27.02, 27.08 and 27.13), fish and game refuges (Sec. 23.09), and wildlife refuges (Sec. 29.621)."

Natural resource management planning in Wisconsin is organized around "Ecological Landscapes." Wisconsin's CELC Plan "coastal and estuarine area" is composed of four primary and four secondary ecological landscapes. Primary landscapes are adjacent to Lake Michigan or Lake Superior: Superior Coastal Plain, Northern Lake Michigan Coastal, Central Lake Michigan Coastal, and Southern Lake Michigan Coastal. Secondary landscapes are located within the coastal area and the Great Lakes watersheds, but are not adjacent to the Great Lakes: Northwest Lowlands, Northwest Sands, Northeast Sands, and Southeast Glacial Plains. The boundaries of the ecological landscapes are incorporated into Maps 2-8.

The Wisconsin CELC Plan emphasizes conservation attributes that are directly connected to Lakes Michigan and Superior, with the intent of protecting places that have substantial and consequential impacts to ecologically-based resources in the coastal and estuarine area. In some cases, areas directly affecting coastal resources may not be adjacent to the coast. For example, areas important for providing fish spawning habitat and nursery areas for juvenile fish for many important fish species in Lakes Michigan and Superior extend miles inland. These areas include tributary streams and adjacent watersheds. Similarly, important sites for migratory birds can be found beyond the immediate coast.

Wisconsin has comprehensively assessed the conservation needs of the state and the threats to these priorities through public processes that resulted in several statewide and regional plans. The CELC Plan priorities and threats assessments are drawn substantially from the "Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan: Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need," and the "Wisconsin Land Legacy Report: An inventory of places to meet Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs," both of which support the conservation of WCMP's Special Coastal Areas.

As these two conservation plans demonstrate, Wisconsin's coastal habitats add significant ecological value and diversity to the state. Diverse and high quality ecological resources and values are considered to be of highest importance in identifying places worthy of protecting through the CELCP. The Wisconsin CELC Plan focuses on the conservation of coastal wetlands, shorelines, and adjacent upland habitats that, if protected, address the state's coastal management priorities.

Wisconsin has organized its priority conservation needs into primary and secondary categories.

This hierarchy reflects the priorities of the national CELCP, which prioritizes the protection of ecological values. The primary category emphasizes coastal and estuarine ecological values, while the secondary category addresses important conservation and coastal management values that are also supported by the national CELCP. The Plan's primary priority conservation needs are:

- **Protection of ecologically diverse or high quality coastal and estuarine habitats.**
- **Protection of coastal and estuarine habitats supporting species listed as Endangered or Threatened, and other Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin.**
- **Protection of critical fish spawning habitat.**
- **Protection of critical bird habitat.**

In addition, the CELC Plan's secondary purpose is the protection of lands with other ecological, conservation, aesthetic, historic/cultural, and public access values. The following are Wisconsin's secondary priority conservation needs:

- **Connecting and buffering lands already in some form of protective ownership**
- **Providing public access to Lakes Michigan and Superior**
- **Filling gaps in recreational opportunities along Lakes Michigan and Superior**
- **Protection of critical historical or cultural features**
- **Protection of critical aesthetic views or values**

#### **Primary Priority Conservation Needs:**

##### **1) Protection of ecologically diverse or high quality coastal and estuarine habitats.**

These include places with exceptionally high quality examples of native natural communities, rare species habitats, areas supporting unusual diversity, and geologic features, as identified by the WDNR in the Wildlife Action Plan or Land Legacy Report. Of particular interest are natural communities unique to the Great Lakes shore or rare in Wisconsin. Examples include a variety of communities within close proximity to the lake shores or with an ecological connection to the Great Lakes (e.g., dunes, beach, bedrock shores, coastal fens, alvars, clay bluffs, interdunal wetlands, and ridge and swale complexes). In addition, there are other natural community types occurring further inland, that are still influenced by the presence of Lakes Michigan and Superior, including boreal forests and boreal rich fens.

##### **2) Protection of coastal and estuarine habitats supporting species listed as Endangered or Threatened, and other Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin.**

Although many of the rare species that occur in the coastal area are associated with natural communities described above, some occur in habitats that are not generally considered exceptionally high quality. As a result, there is a need to protect some areas specifically to meet the life history requirements and ensure the continued survival and recovery of rare species in Wisconsin. Coastal and estuarine habitats for species of greatest conservation need (which are described in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and include those listed as Endangered or Threatened by the state or Federal government) occurring in the coastal area are incorporated into this plan by reference and the species of concern are listed in Appendix A.

The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan identifies issues and threats facing each of the vertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the natural communities they inhabit. Specific priority conservation actions to address these problems are also described. Those priority conservation actions related to habitat protection are included in the CELC Plan by reference. Many of the threats and conservation actions are related to habitat issues and may be coordinated to simultaneously address the needs of multiple species.

### **3) Protection of critical fish spawning habitat.**

Wisconsin's near shore areas and tributaries play very significant roles in the reproductive success of sport and non-game fisheries in Lakes Michigan and Superior. For example:

- It is estimated that 90% of the walleye and northern pike in Green Bay spawn in the handful of rivers and streams that drain the west shore. Much of this critical spawning habitat lies along the wetlands and streams in the southern and eastern portions of Marinette and Oconto counties.
- Green Bay is the principal waters for spotted muskellunge restoration in Lake Michigan.
- The Menominee River contains the largest population of Lake Michigan resident lake sturgeon.
- A short stretch of the coastline of Door County provides a majority of the suitable spawning habitat for the entire Lake Michigan whitefish population.
- The St. Louis River is an important resource for the Lake Superior walleye population.
- Lake Superior freshwater estuaries provide breeding and shelter habitat for many species of Lake Superior fish and wildlife.

Correspondingly, the small rivers and streams that drain the south shore of Lake Superior provide important spawning habitat for trout and salmon. Many of these originate in the sand barrens of the Bayfield Peninsula and flow through the clay plain. These waters, like those draining into Lake Michigan, are popular and important sport fishing resources.

Threats to these habitats include non-point pollution, increasing amounts of impervious surfaces draining into the streams and rivers, wetland filling, and invasive species. Lake Superior habitats are further threatened by agricultural and forestry land management practices that increase surface runoff to streams and rivers. Land conservation projects that seek to minimize these impacts will likely result in significant benefits to the fisheries.

### **4) Protection of critical bird habitat**

The coastlines along Lakes Michigan and Superior provide valuable bird habitats, both migratory stopover/resting areas and habitats for breeding species. The near shoreline area plays a crucial role for millions of migrating birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, other passerine landbirds, and waterbirds (loons, grebes, cormorants, herons, rails, cranes, gulls and terns) during their migratory seasons. Riparian corridors and shorelines of inland lakes that lie in close proximity to Lakes Michigan and Superior also serve as areas of high migrant concentration.

Coastlines funnel raptors northward in spring and southward in fall, with particularly high

concentrations occurring along geographical features such as ridges and peninsulas. Recent studies using Doppler radar indicate that parks and greenways of Milwaukee and Green Bay are heavily used by migratory landbirds upon their arrival in spring and prior to their departure in fall. Although these sites are small and often degraded, they serve a vital role as resting and feeding sites for various migrating birds. In addition to coastlines and riparian corridors, open water areas within a quarter mile of shore also serve as vital stopover habitat, allowing diving ducks to congregate and forage during their migratory treks.

Many factors challenge the long-term survival of migratory bird populations of the Great Lakes. Rapid loss of stopover habitat due to changes in land use threatens migratory birds, which have difficulty finding quality stopover habitat and face increased competition for food at remaining sites. Invasive plant species can adversely impact stopover habitat by replacing native species, thereby reducing habitat quality and altering prey species composition and availability. The growing presence of communication and wind towers on the landscape as well as tall buildings made of reflective glass has resulted in increased bird mortality due to flocks colliding with these structures. Neotropical migrant landbirds (i.e. thrushes, vireos, and warblers) are especially vulnerable to collisions when migrating at night through mist and fog. The many pressures on birds during migration require a comprehensive conservation approach, of which the CELC Plan is a part, to promote the long-term survival of migrant populations and to protect vital stopover habitat along our Great Lakes coastlines.

### **Secondary priority conservation needs:**

#### **5) Connecting and buffering lands already in some form of protective ownership.**

Several relatively large tracts along both Great Lakes in Wisconsin are currently held in public or private conservation ownership. Nearly all are being surrounded by development (primarily residential housing) that is drawn not only to the lakes, but also to these protected properties. As a result there is a continuing need to buffer existing properties so that their conservation and recreation values are maintained.

In addition, some protected properties along the shore are in close proximity to other lands that are protected. Connecting these lands to each other and to protected lands further inland, could result in improved ecological conditions such as increased habitat area and wildlife corridors, and increased recreation opportunities. Implementing and maintaining connections and buffers is challenging due to increasing development and fragmentation of land ownership.

#### **6) Providing public access to Lakes Michigan and Superior.**

Current demand for recreational access to the Great Lakes significantly exceeds supply. Recent State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) data highlights the need for increased public access near urban centers, especially along Lake Michigan, for beach walking, fishing, and boating. Threats to public access include the continued subdivision of ownership and associated loss of informal access, rising land costs, and residential development along the lakes.

### **7) Filling gaps in recreational opportunities along Lakes Michigan and Superior.**

Some of the Wisconsin's most popular public properties are located on Lakes Michigan and Superior. Peninsula, Whitefish Dunes, and Kohler-Andrae State Parks, Point Beach State Forest, and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore collectively draw over 2 million visitors a year (many of whom travel from out-of-state) to paddle, camp, hike, watch wildlife, and simply walk the beaches. Despite these properties and other smaller public properties, there is a large and increasing demand for public properties that provide opportunities to engage in a variety of low-impact recreation activities (such as hiking, biking, camping, wildlife watching, and outdoor education) with access or views of the Great Lakes. Maintaining quality recreation areas and developing new lakeshore and coastal sites is hampered by increasing development and fragmentation of land ownership.

### **8) Protection of critical historical or cultural features.**

As with other coastal states, some of Wisconsin's earliest settlements, both Native American and Euro-American, occurred along the shores of Lakes Michigan and Superior. As a result, lands along the Great Lakes harbor a disproportionate amount of archaeological, cultural, and historic features and resources. Although some have been protected, many have been lost. Those features that still remain are under significant threat from development and insufficient preservation efforts and are in need of protection. Often, protecting these resources can be accomplished concurrently with other natural resource conservation objectives. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a database of cultural and historic resources that can be consulted for site-specific features.

### **9) Protection of critical aesthetic views or values.**

Some of the state's most impressive and scenic views occur along the shores of Lakes Michigan and Superior. Properties with views out over the lakes are in great demand. Although not the focus or priority of the Wisconsin CELC Plan, protection of areas for ecological purposes that also maintain these scenic views would provide a complementary benefit.

## **Benefits to Wisconsin's Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve**

The CELCP Act of 2009 requires that funding be provided through the program to benefit National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs). Wisconsin has one NERR at the St. Louis River estuary in Superior, Wisconsin. The Lake Superior NERR Management Plan does not identify specific areas for future acquisition, because its boundary encompasses substantial areas of publicly-owned land. However, the NERR may still benefit from additional land protection within its associated watershed. The Lake Superior NERR is currently identifying its "targeted watershed". Wisconsin projects that otherwise meet the goals and requirements of the CELCP and are located within the Reserve's targeted watershed would receive additional consideration by NOAA as projects that provide benefits to the Lake Superior NERR.

## **Working Waterfronts**

The CELCP Act requires that states ensure that the CELCP acquisitions 'complement working waterfront needs,' i.e., does not conflict with or impede working waterfront uses.

Although the CELCP Act does not define working waterfronts, they are defined in the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act of 2009 (H.R. 2548) as water-dependent commercial activities, including commercial fishing, recreational fishing, tourism, aquaculture, boatbuilding, transportation, and many other water-dependent businesses. It is likely that most of these activities in Wisconsin will be found in more urban or developed settings, which are not the focus of the Wisconsin CELC Plan. However, project proposals will each be evaluated to ensure that they complement working waterfront needs.

**C. Identification of “project areas” that represent the state’s priority areas for protection.**

*Federal Guidance: In this section, identify “project areas” that represent the state’s priority areas for conservation. These “project areas” would guide a state’s solicitation, identification and selection of projects to nominate to the national competitive process.*

“Project Areas” are defined as “discrete areas to be identified within Wisconsin’s CELC Plan that describe the state’s priority areas for conservation based on national and state criteria, representing their values to be protected through the CELCP and areas threatened by conversion.” Wisconsin’s Project Areas are based on the types of lands and values discussed in the sections above.

Table 1 lists discrete Project Areas for Wisconsin, within the previously described geographical extent of the coastal area. Areas are not mutually exclusive; for example, a property might have both priority coastal habitats and scenic shorelines present. The state evaluation criteria give greater weight to properties that address the state’s primary conservation needs and have characteristics represented by more than one project area. Highest preference is given in the state evaluation criteria for these project areas that exist in the four primary Ecological Landscapes, with second preference to these project areas where they exist in the remainder of the CELC Coastal Area. Definitions for each Project Area listed in the table follow. The next section lists and describes supporting plans incorporated by reference into the Wisconsin CELC Plan that include additional details about lands within the Project Areas for which prior acquisition planning efforts have occurred.

Table 1. Project Areas
<p>Lands that address primary priority conservation needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas from the Wildlife Action Plan.</li> <li>• Land Legacy Areas that address primary conservation needs</li> <li>• Important Bird Areas (either “official” or “approved”) which include coastal and estuarine habitats.</li> <li>• Natural areas of statewide or greater significance (NA-1 sites) and coastal and estuarine-dependent Critical Species Habitat sites within southeastern Wisconsin.</li> <li>• Tributary corridors, coastal wetlands and nearshore/tributary fish spawning habitat</li> <li>• Migratory bird stopover habitat</li> </ul>
<p>Lands that address secondary priority conservation needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs</li> <li>• WDNR project areas identified for acquisition as primary or buffer lands</li> <li>• Shoreline properties</li> <li>• Cultural and historic sites</li> <li>• Scenic shorelines and shorelines with scenic views of the Great Lakes</li> </ul>

What follows are descriptions of places that contain areas representing the priority lands and values. It is not the intent of this listing to preclude other places from consideration; if they also would help conserve the State CELCP priorities, this list intended to advise recipients as to where the priorities are most likely to be found.

Although many of the lands described in the list of Project Areas have been mapped by various agencies, it is not yet possible to provide a comprehensive map of Project Areas. Where possible, maps of the types of Project Areas are provided below and in the Appendix. If maps of the Project Areas, as described, are published after this Plan is prepared, those maps may be used to determine the geographic extent of Project Area prior to revision of this Plan. The following descriptions are provided as a guide to determine whether a property containing the priority features could be considered a CELCP Project Area.

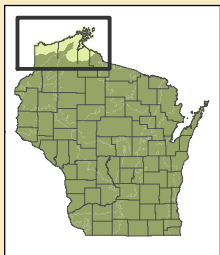
**Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas from the Wildlife Action Plan.**

The highest priorities for the CELC Plan are the natural communities (within the four primary ecological landscapes) that are identified as priorities for conservation by the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. These natural communities are listed in Table 2, below, and descriptions of each of the natural communities are found in Appendix B. The locations of these priority natural communities are presented as “Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas” on maps 2-5 and are described in detail in Appendix C.

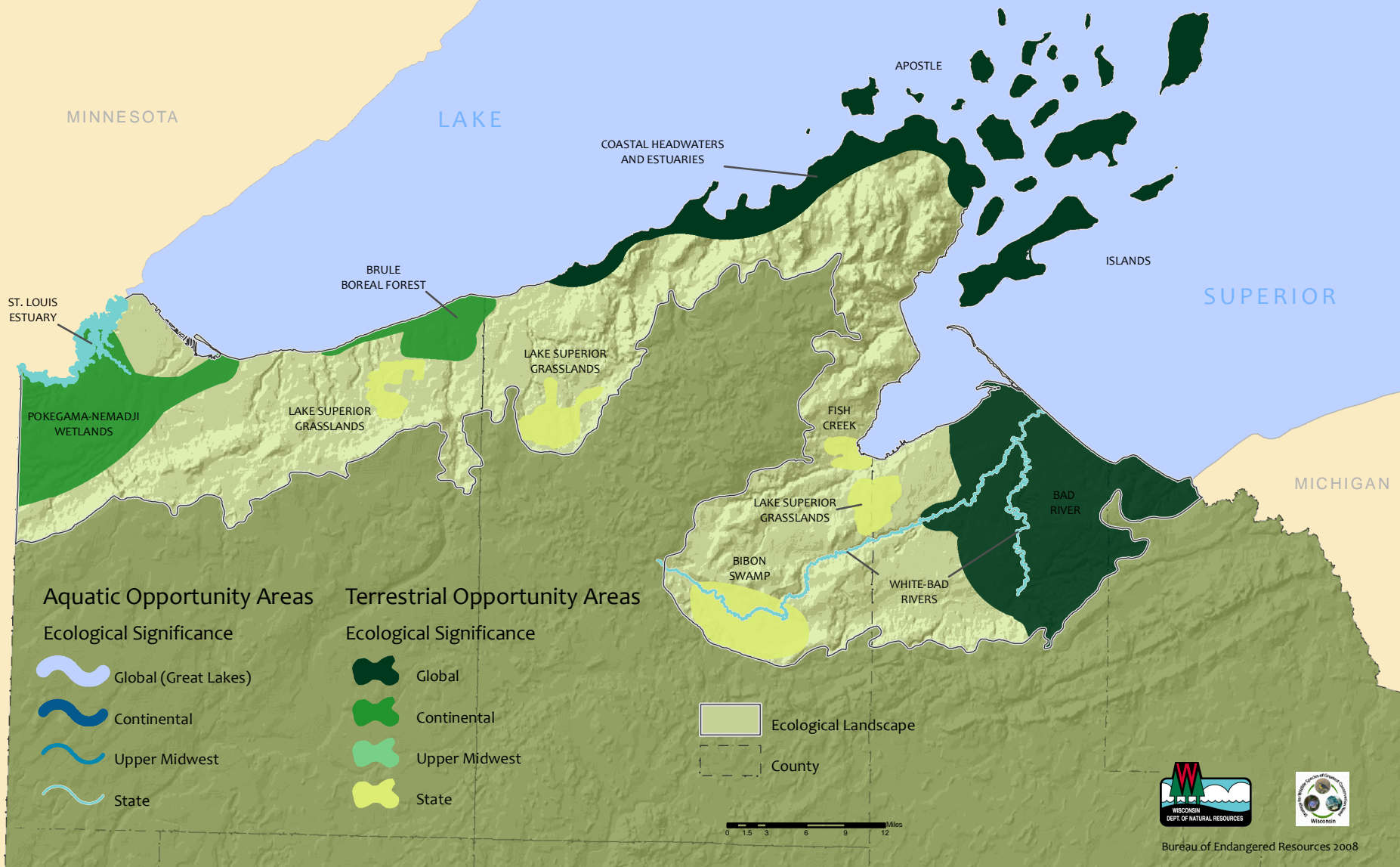
<p style="text-align: center;">Table 2                      Priority Natural Communities by Ecological Landscape as identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources                      Source: “Table of Opportunities for Sustaining Natural Communities, by Ecological Landscape”, Wildlife Action Plan (<a href="http://dnr.wi.gov/landscapes/ecoloppstable.pdf">http://dnr.wi.gov/landscapes/ecoloppstable.pdf</a>)</p>			
<b>Superior Coastal Plain</b>	<b>Northern Lake Michigan Coastal</b>	<b>Central Lake Michigan Coastal</b>	<b>Southern Lake Michigan Coastal</b>
Boreal Forest	Boreal Rich Fen	Alvar	Warmwater Streams
Coldwater Streams	Dry Cliff	Dry Cliff	Wet-mesic Prairie
Coolwater Streams	Emergent Marsh	Great Lakes Beach	
Dry Cliff	Great Lakes Alkaline Rockshore	Great Lakes Dune	
Emergent Marsh	Great Lakes Beach	Great Lakes Ridge and Swale	
Emergent Marsh - Wild Rice	Great Lakes Dune	Warmwater Rivers	
Great Lakes Barrens	Great Lakes Ridge and Swale	Warmwater Streams	
Great Lakes Beach	Northern Mesic Forest		
Great Lakes Dune	Northern Sedge Meadow		
Interdunal Wetland	Northern Wet-mesic Forest		
Moist Cliff	Shrub Carr		
Open Bog	Warmwater Rivers		
Shore Fen	Warmwater Streams		
Submergent Marsh			
Warmwater Streams			



# Map 2 Wisconsin's Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need 2008-2015

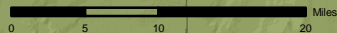
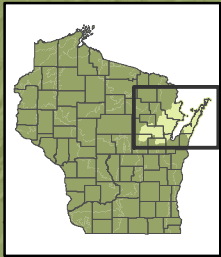


## Superior Coastal Plain Ecological Landscape



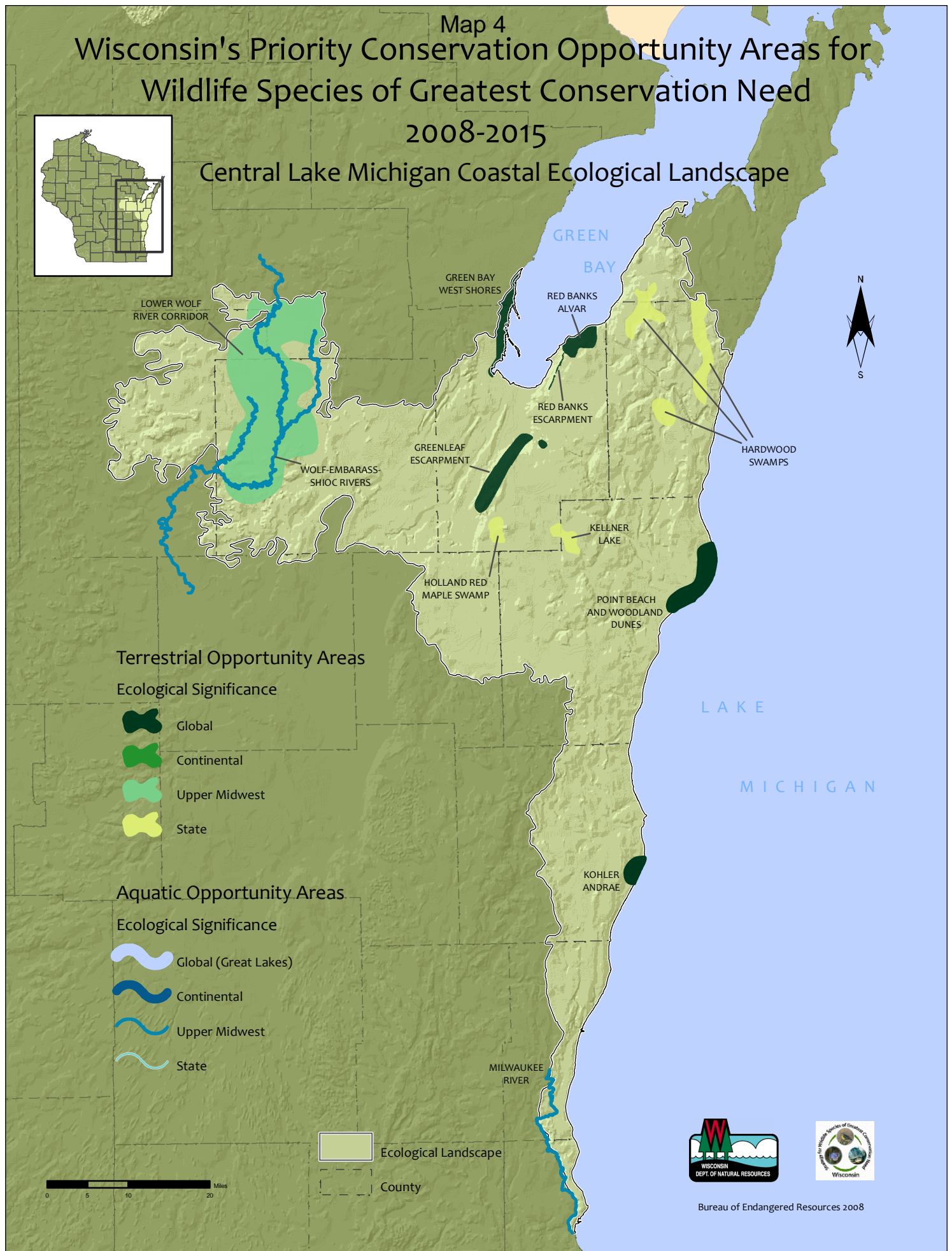
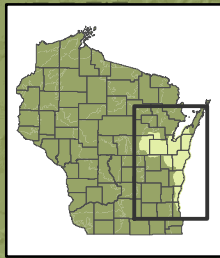
Map 3  
 Wisconsin's Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for  
 Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need  
 2008-2015

Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape







# Map 4 Wisconsin's Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need 2008-2015

## Central Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape



### Terrestrial Opportunity Areas



#### Ecological Significance

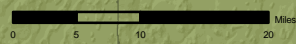
-  Global
-  Continental
-  Upper Midwest
-  State

### Aquatic Opportunity Areas

#### Ecological Significance

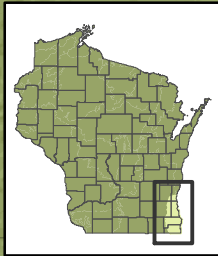
-  Global (Great Lakes)
-  Continental
-  Upper Midwest
-  State

-  Ecological Landscape
-  County



# Map 5 Wisconsin's Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need 2008-2015

## Southern Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape



### Terrestrial Opportunity Areas

#### Ecological Significance

- Global
- Continental
- Upper Midwest
- State

### Aquatic Opportunity Areas

#### Ecological Significance

- Global (Great Lakes)
- Continental
- Upper Midwest
- State

- Ecological Landscape
- County

0 2.5 5 10 15 Miles

ILLINOIS

MILWAUKEE RIVER

LAKE

MICHIGAN

BONG GRASSLANDS

CHIWAUKEE PRAIRIE



## Land Legacy Areas that address primary priority conservation needs

The Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, the result of a three-year study, describes the places believed to be most important to meeting Wisconsin’s conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years. All together there are 229 *Legacy Places* and 8 *Statewide Needs and Resources* that collectively are the special places that “make Wisconsin – Wisconsin.” Those Legacy Places specifically occurring along the Lake Michigan and Lake Superior coasts in the four primary ecological landscape types (Superior Coastal Plains, Northern Lake Michigan Coastal, Central Lake Michigan Coastal, and Southern Lake Michigan Coastal) fall within Wisconsin’s designated CELCP area, and as such, will comprise many of the “project areas” for the purposes of CELCP, as they are most likely to contain the habitats or values that are a priority for CELCP.

Several of the sites identified as “Land Legacy Areas” address Wisconsin’s primary priority conservation needs and are considered Project Areas. Tables 3-6, below, lists the Land Legacy Areas and identifies which conservation needs would be addressed by their protection through CELCP. Again, the designation of Conservation Opportunity Area addresses the first CELC Plan priority conservation need, “protection of ecologically diverse or high quality coastal and estuarine habitats.”

<b>Table 3: Land Legacy Areas that address primary priority conservation needs - Northern Lake Michigan Coastal (see Map 6)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Chambers Island (CI)	Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) - global significance (coastal habitats)
Colonial Waterbird Nesting Islands (CS)	Critical coastal bird habitat; COA - global significance (coastal habitats)
Eagle Harbor to Toft Point Corridor (EH)	Critical habitat - endangered species; COA - global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
Grand Traverse Islands (GT)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats)
Mink River Estuary - Newport State Park - Europe Lake (ME)	COA - global significance (coastal and estuarine habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
North Bay to Bailey’s Harbor (NY)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats)
Oconto River Marsh (OM)	COA - global significance (coastal and estuarine habitats); fish spawning habitat
Peninsula State Park (PS)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats)
Peninsula State Park to Jacksonport Corridor (PJ)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats)
Peshtigo Harbor Marsh (PH)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats); fish spawning habitat; critical coastal bird habitat
Seagull Bar (SB)	Critical coastal bird habitat
Shivering Sands (SS)	COA - global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
Suamico, Little Suamico and Pensaukee	COA - global significance (coastal habitats);

Rivers (SU)	fish spawning habitat
West Shore Green Bay Wetlands (WS)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat; fish spawning habitat

<b>Table 4: Land Legacy Areas that address primary priority conservation needs – Central Lake Michigan Coastal (see Maps 6 and 7)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Fischer Creek, Point Creek and Cleveland Swamp (FP)	Critical coastal bird habitat
Colonial Waterbird Nesting Islands (CS)	Critical coastal bird habitat
Kohler - Andrae Dunes (KA)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
Point Au Sable (PO)	Critical coastal bird habitat
Point Beach and Dunes (PD)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
Red Banks Alvar (RA)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats)

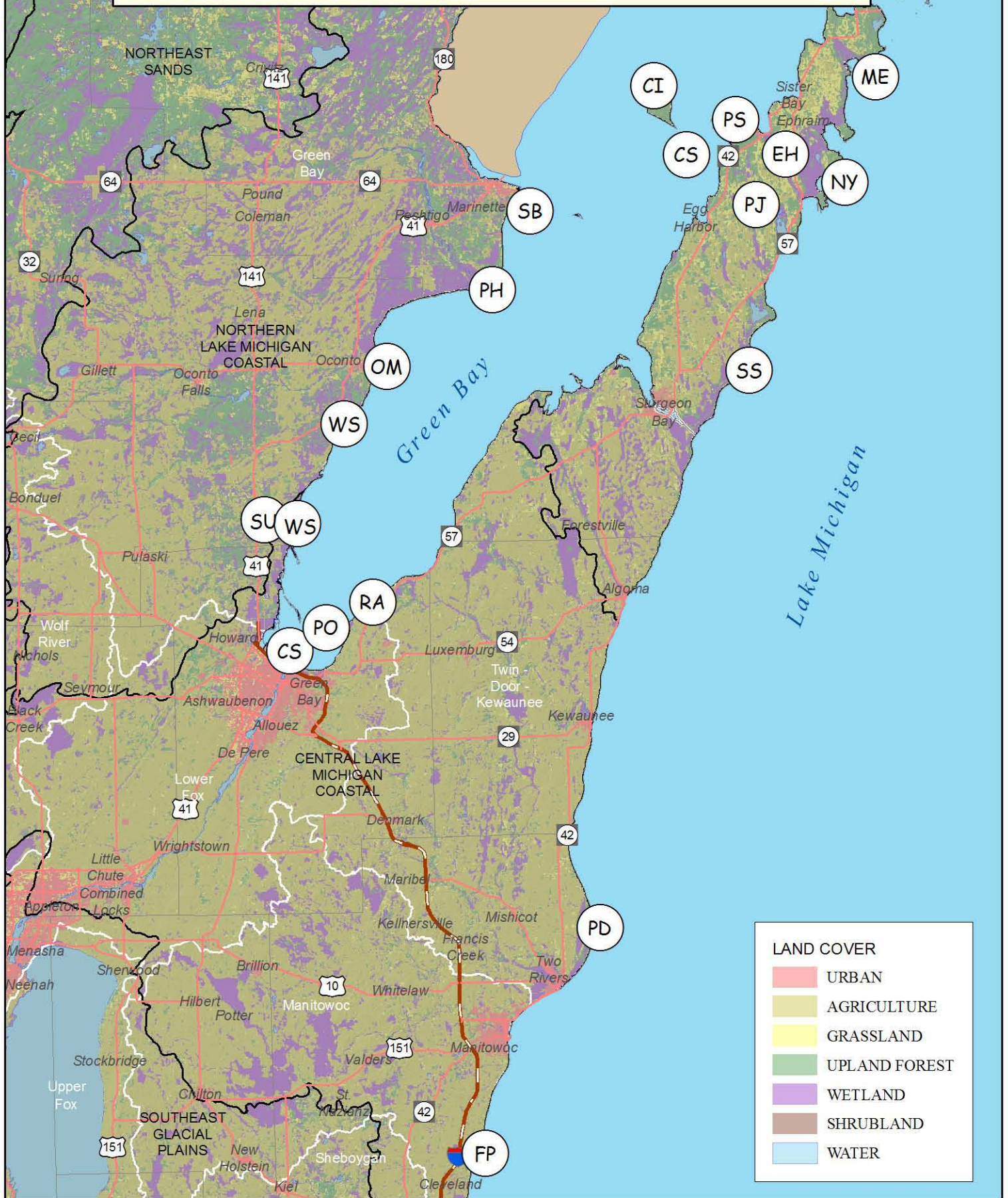
<b>Table 5: Land Legacy Areas that address primary priority conservation needs – Southern Lake Michigan Coastal (see Map 7)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Chiwaukee Prairie (CP)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats)
Seminary Woods - St. Francis Lakeshore (SF)	Critical coastal bird habitat

### Lake Superior

<b>Table 6: Land Legacy Areas that address primary priority conservation needs – Lake Superior Coastal Plain (see Map 8)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Apostle Islands (AI)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat
Big Bay (BY)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats)
Lake Superior South Shore Streams (LS)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats); fish spawning habitat
Mt. Ashwabay (MA)	Critical coastal bird habitat
Nemadji River and Wetlands (NJ)	COA – continental significance (coastal habitats)
Quarry Point to Bark Point (QP)	COA – global significance (coastal habitats)
St. Louis Estuary and Pokegama Wetlands (ST)	COA – continental significance (coastal habitats); critical coastal bird habitat; fish spawning habitat
Western Lake Superior Drowned River	COA – global significance (coastal habitats);

Mouths (WL)	critical coastal bird habitat; fish spawning habitat
Wisconsin Point (WI)	COA - continental significance (coastal habitats); critical bird habitat

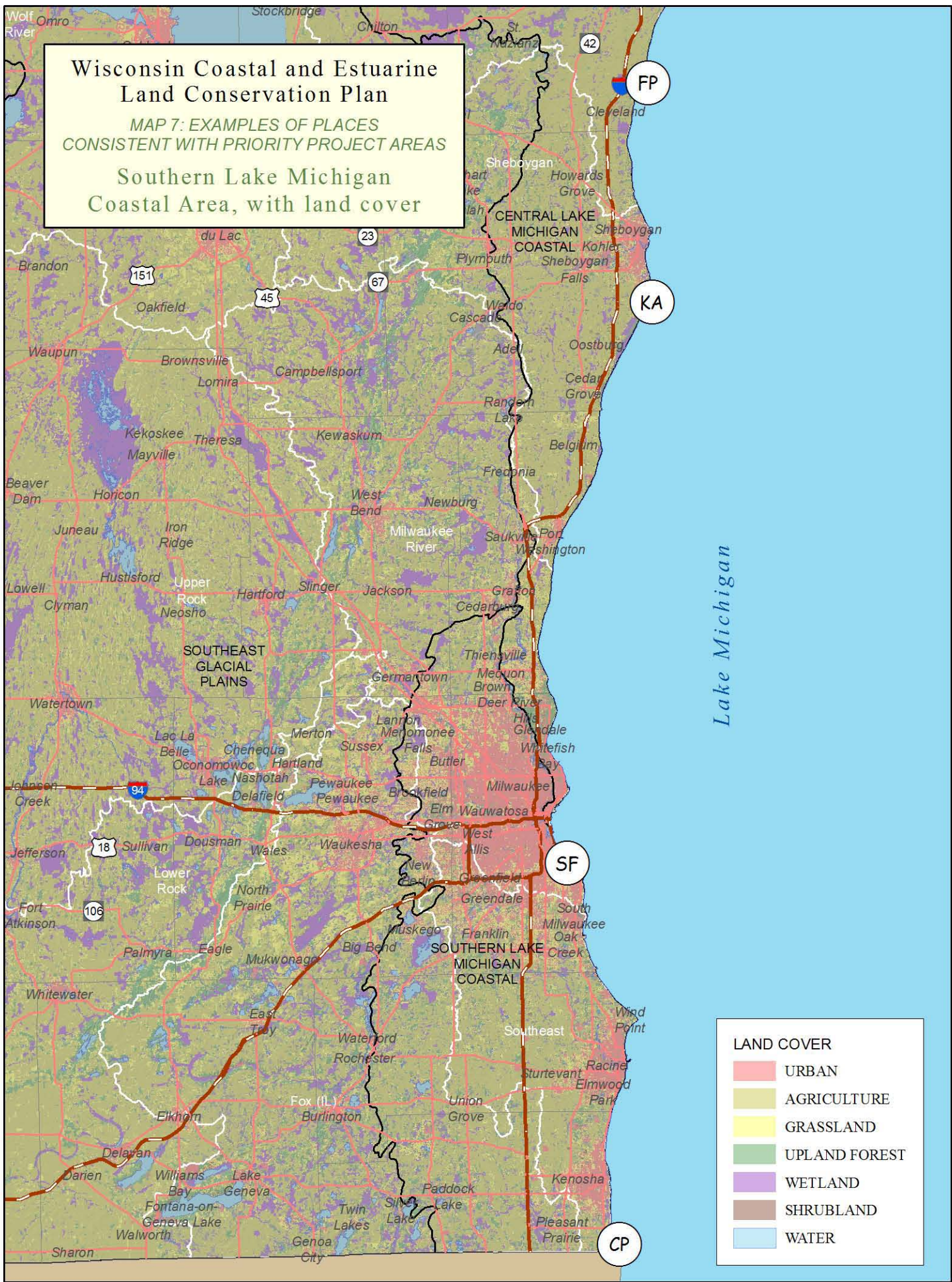
Wisconsin Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan  
 MAP 6: EXAMPLES OF PLACES CONSISTENT WITH PRIORITY PROJECT AREAS  
 Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Area, with land cover



LAND COVER	
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<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:yellowgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	AGRICULTURE
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	GRASSLAND
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span>	UPLAND FOREST
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span>	WETLAND
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:brown; border:1px solid black;"></span>	SHRUBLAND
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightblue; border:1px solid black;"></span>	WATER



**Wisconsin Coastal and Estuarine  
Land Conservation Plan**  
 MAP 7: EXAMPLES OF PLACES  
 CONSISTENT WITH PRIORITY PROJECT AREAS  
**Southern Lake Michigan  
 Coastal Area, with land cover**



Lake Michigan

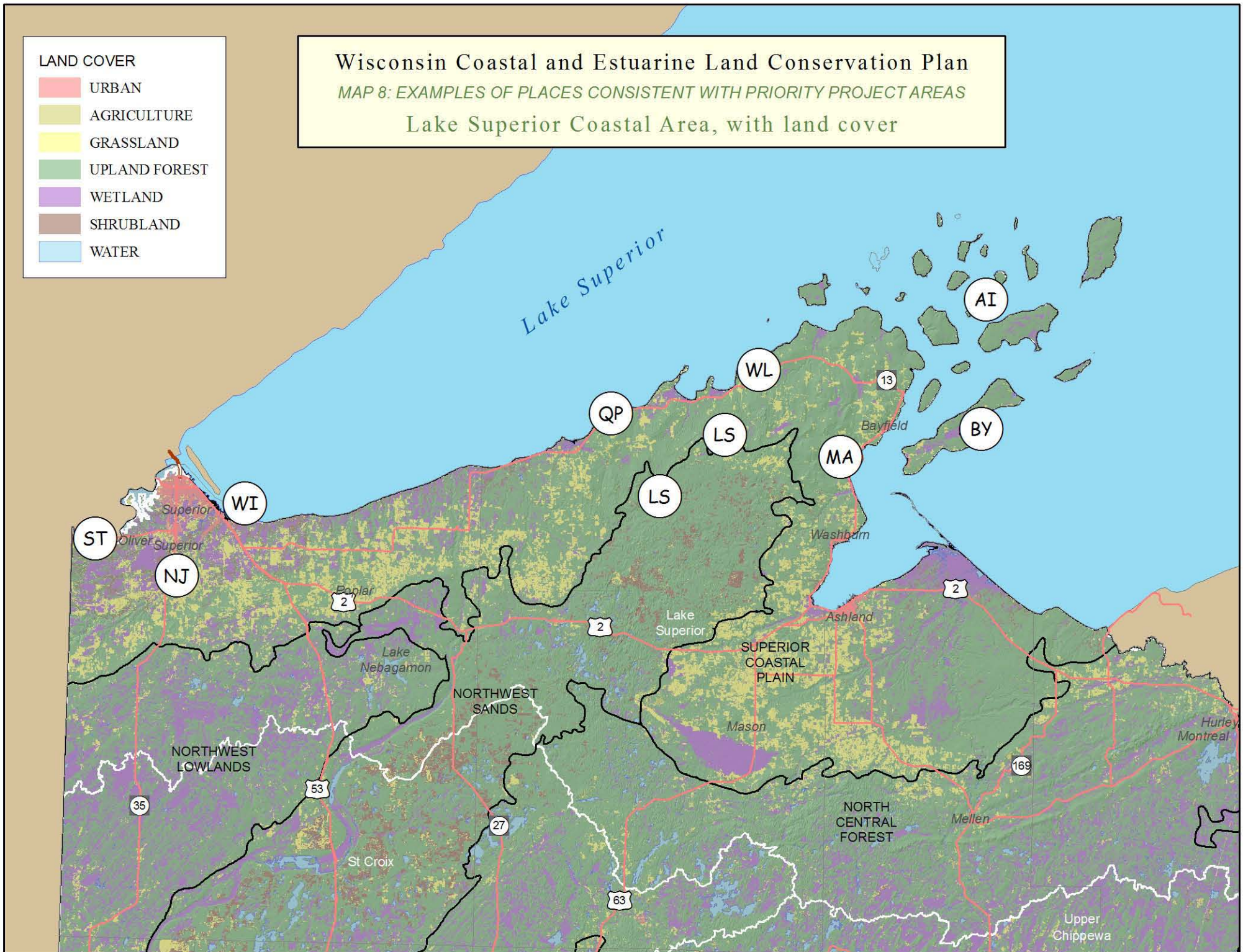
LAND COVER

- URBAN
- AGRICULTURE
- GRASSLAND
- UPLAND FOREST
- WETLAND
- SHRUBLAND
- WATER

Wisconsin Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

MAP 8: EXAMPLES OF PLACES CONSISTENT WITH PRIORITY PROJECT AREAS

Lake Superior Coastal Area, with land cover



**Important Bird Areas (either “official” or “approved”) which include coastal and estuarine habitats.**

Wisconsin is in the process of identifying Important Bird Area’s (IBA) with the goal of “coordinating the management and protection of these sites for long-term conservation of birds and their habitats.” An IBA is a site that provides essential habitat to one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds, and so addresses the priority conservation need for “protection of critical bird habitat.” IBAs in the CELC Coastal Area are listed below, and future sites will be added to the list maintained by the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

**Table 7: Important Bird Areas that address primary priority conservation needs**  
(see <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/IBA/> for locations)

Site Name	Ecological Landscape	County
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield
Kakagon/Bad River Wetland complex	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland
Bibon Swamp	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield
Lower Chequamegon Bay	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland, Bayfield
South Shore Wetlands	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield
Wisconsin Point	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Douglas
Whitefish Dunes-Shivering Sands	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Toft Point-Ridges-Mud Lake	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Mink River Estuary-Newport State Park	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Lower Peshtigo River	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette
Seagull Bar	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette
Green Bay West Shore Wetlands	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette, Oconto, Brown
Woodland Dunes Nature Preserve	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Ozaukee Bight Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Ozaukee
Harrington Beach Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Ozaukee
Cleveland Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Point Beach State Forest	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Lower Green Bay Islands-Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary	Central Lake Michigan	Brown

**Natural areas of statewide or greater significance (NA-1 sites) and coastal and estuarine-dependent Critical Species Habitat sites within southeastern Wisconsin**

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has identified the most important remaining natural areas and critical species habitat in the seven-county region, which includes the Southern Lake Michigan and part of the Central Lake Michigan ecological landscapes. The natural areas are classified according to their conservation significance; the

highest classification is “NA-1” – statewide or greater significance. Critical species habitat sites support endangered, threatened, or rare plant or animal species, but are located outside of identified natural areas. These sites are recommended for protection through public or private ownership for permanent conservation. For the CELC Plan, those NA-1 and critical species habitat sites that address priority conservation needs are considered Project Areas. Please refer to the maps in Appendix D for locations of NA-1 and critical species habitat sites.

**Tributary corridors, coastal wetlands, and nearshore/tributary fish spawning habitat**

The protection of corridors along tributaries to the Great Lakes, coastal wetlands, and fish spawning habitat is essential for addressing the priority conservation needs in Wisconsin’s Coastal Area. This category of project areas captures those important coastal and estuarine resources that fall outside the designated sites of the Wildlife Action Plan, Land Legacy Report, Important Bird Areas, and the SEWRPC Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Plan. If a site otherwise provides significant benefits to coastal fisheries or other high quality coastal and estuarine habitat, it is considered a Project Area. For the purposes of the CELCP, proposals that fall within this category will be evaluated on how site-specific attributes meet the goals of CELCP.

**Migratory bird stopover habitat**

The coastal areas of Lakes Michigan and Superior are major flyways for migratory birds, which need suitable habitat along their route to rest and refuel. Major stopover habitat sites are identified as some of the Important Bird Areas. However, even smaller blocks of natural habitat are critical for migrating birds. WDNR has identified stopover sites which have documented use by migratory birds. Those sites identified as “Tier I and II” along the shore of Lakes Michigan and Superior or otherwise having coastal and estuarine habitats are considered Project Areas. Tier I and II sites are identified in Table 8. Further, WDNR has developed predictive models for likely stopover habitat site. Although the predicted sites are not defined as Project Areas, the existence of modeled stopover habitat will be considered in the evaluation of CELCP proposals.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Ecological Landscape</b>	<b>County</b>
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield
Bad River IBA	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland
Oronto Bay	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Iron
Tributaries to Lake Superior	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield, Douglas
St. Louis River Estuary	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Douglas
Wisconsin Point	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Douglas
White River Corridor and Uplands	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland
Lake Superior Drainages	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield
Head of the Bay (Chequamegon)	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Bayfield, Ashland
Kakagon Long Island	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland
Lake Superior Coastal Shoreline	Lake Superior Coastal Plain	Ashland, Bayfield
Peshtigo Harbor	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette, Oconto
County Line Swamp	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette, Oconto

Pecor Point	Northern Lake Michigan	Oconto
Potawatomi State Park	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Door Bluff County Park	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Stony Creek & L. Michigan Shoreline	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Hibbards Creek - Thorp Pond	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Bottom Marsh - Fish Creek	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Peninsula State Park	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Mud Lake, Ridges Sanctuary & Toft Point	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
North Bay and Marshalls Point	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Mink River	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Newport St Park & Europe Lake	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Ship Canal & Kellner Fen	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Shivering Sands & Cave Point	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Kangaroo Lake, Piel Creek & Meridian Pk	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Bjorklunden	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Clark Lake & Lost Lake	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
White Fish Bay Creek	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Bayshore Blufflands	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Washington Island	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
North Bay and Marshalls Point	Northern Lake Michigan	Door
Lower Peshtigo River	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette
Seagull Bar	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette
Green Bay West Shore Wetlands	Northern Lake Michigan	Marinette, Oconto, Brown
Barkhausen County Park	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Sensiba Wildlife Area	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Baird Creek Parkway	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Point au Sable	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Longtail Point	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Lower Green Bay	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Duck Creek Delta	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Peter's Marsh	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Fox River Mouth	Central Lake Michigan	Brown
Cleveland Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Point Beach State Forest	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Woodland Dunes Nature Preserve	Central Lake Michigan	Manitowoc
Ozaukee Bight Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Ozaukee
Harrington Beach Lakeshore Migration Corridor	Central Lake Michigan	Ozaukee
Lower Green Bay Islands-Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary	Central Lake Michigan	Brown

**Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs**

Several of the sites identified as “Land Legacy Areas” address Wisconsin’s *secondary* priority conservation needs and are considered Project Areas. Tables 9-12, below, lists the Land Legacy Areas and identifies which conservation needs would be addressed by their protection through CELCP.

**Lake Michigan**

<b>Table 9: Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs - Northern Lake Michigan Coastal (see Map 6)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Menominee River (MR)	Providing public access; recreational opportunities
Niagara Escarpment (NE)	Protection of aesthetic views; connecting and buffering lands
Oconto River (OR)	Recreational opportunities; critical historical/cultural features
Peshtigo River (PE)	Recreational opportunities; protection of aesthetic views
Kangaroo Lake (KL)	Connecting and buffering lands; protection of aesthetic views

<b>Table 10: Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs - Central Lake Michigan Coastal (see Maps 5-6)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Duck Creek and Burma Swamp (DC)	Recreational opportunities
Manitowoc - Branch River (MB)	Connecting and buffering lands; recreational opportunities
Milwaukee River (MI)	Connecting and buffering lands; recreational opportunities
Twin Rivers (TW)	Recreational opportunities

<b>Table 11: Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs - Southern Lake Michigan Coastal (see Map 6)</b>	
<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Menomonee and Little Menomonee Rivers (MN)	Recreational opportunities
Milwaukee River (MI)	Connecting and buffering lands; recreational opportunities
Pike (Kenosha) River (PK)	Recreational opportunities
Root River (RO)	Recreational opportunities

## Lake Superior

**Table 12: Land Legacy Areas that address secondary priority conservation needs - Lake Superior Coastal Plain (see Map 7)**

<b>Project Area (Map Symbol):</b>	<b>Conservation Needs Addressed:</b>
Montreal River (MT)	Recreational opportunities; protection of aesthetic views
White River (WR)	Connecting and buffering lands; recreational opportunities
Bois Brule River (BB)	Connecting and buffering lands; recreational opportunities; critical historical/cultural features
Bad River (BD)	Connecting and buffering lands; critical historical/cultural features

### **WDNR “project areas” identified for acquisition as primary or buffer lands**

WDNR project areas are defined boundaries for future acquisition. Often, existing public lands are acquired in stages. The private land remaining within the existing project area provides an opportunity to buffer, expand, or connect existing protected lands. WDNR project areas within the four primary ecological landscapes that would contribute to the protection of coastal and estuarine habitats are considered CELCP Project Areas. WDNR project area boundaries may be found in individual property master plans or may be acquired directly from property managers.

### **Shoreline properties**

Lands with shore access that are currently held in some form of protective ownership are extremely popular recreation destinations. Boating, beach walking, bird watching, and fishing are all very popular activities along both lakes. Although public lands occur only sporadically along the coasts of both lakes they are heavily used by both residents and visitors, particularly where they occur near urban centers. As with coastal states throughout the country, Wisconsin’s Great Lakes shoreline is under extreme development pressure which not only results in direct threats (ownership fragmentation, run-off problems, habitat destruction, etc.) but also significantly influences land costs.

In addition to the recreation value of shoreline properties, they have broad conservation value. The Wisconsin Wildlife Action plan identifies Great Lakes Shorelines as Conservation Opportunity Areas of Global Significance. According to the Wildlife Action Plan, “these shorelines support a diverse and distinct mosaic of natural communities and many regional endemic species...Lakes Superior and Michigan and their shorelines are important migratory bird corridors and provide habitat for wintering waterfowl.” The Wisconsin CELC Plan identifies any shoreline parcel that provides an opportunity to address the Plan’s priority conservation needs is considered a Project Area. Obviously, it is not feasible to evaluate the thousands of individual parcels along the Great Lakes shoreline, so it is the responsibility of

grant applicants to provide information about the values to be protected by acquiring a particular parcel.

### **Cultural and historic sites**

Although of secondary importance in identifying areas that are priorities for the CELC Program, the Wisconsin CELC Plan seeks to include the protection of significant cultural, historic, and scenic resources where feasible. Given the settlement patterns of the state, there are opportunities to protect important cultural, historic, and scenic areas in the coastal area. Examples could include lighthouses, historic buildings and places, archaeological sites, areas that provide scenic views of the Great Lakes and shorelines, and particularly notable landmarks seen from the lakes. As with shoreline parcels it is the responsibility of grant applicants to provide information about the cultural and historic values to be protected by acquiring a particular parcel. These values may be identified by inclusion on the National Historic Register, previous inventories by the Wisconsin Historical Society,

### **Scenic shorelines and shorelines with scenic views of the Great Lakes**

Many areas of Great Lakes shorelines are considered especially scenic. Protecting these aesthetic values is one of the purposes of the CELCP. A property's scenic value may be identified through various means, such as its inclusion in a scenic byway corridor or through the methodology identified in the Lake Superior Visual Quality Guide. Similar to the previous two categories of Project Areas, it is the responsibility of grant applicants to provide information about the scenic or aesthetic values to be protected by acquiring a particular parcel.



**D. Description of existing plans, or elements thereof, that are incorporated into this CELC plan.**

*Federal Guidance: In this section, list any plans or elements of plans that are incorporated into this CELC plan and please note, briefly, how each relates to the lands or values identified under section B or the project areas identified under section C, above.*

As the previous sections make clear, the Wisconsin CELC Plan utilizes the results of several statewide and regional planning efforts to identify priority conservation needs and values, and the Project Areas to be protected through CELCP grants. The plans and documents that provide supporting documentation for the lands identified as Project Areas in Section II.C. above are listed in Table 13 below and are incorporated by reference into Wisconsin’s CELC Plan.

Additional land and natural resource conservation plans exist at local or regional scales. For example, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) has developed its Greenseams Program for strategically acquiring wetlands and land with hydric soils to reduce flooding downstream. These plans may be a valuable resource for identifying and evaluating suitable projects that may overlap with Project Areas identified in this plan. Although these local plans have not been incorporated into Wisconsin’s CELC Plan, they may be used as supporting documentation and as part of the project selection and evaluation process. Further, projects that demonstrate support for local or regional plans can receive additional points in the national competition.

Table 13. Plans or data sources with lands included in Wisconsin’s CELC Plan Project Areas (Citations can be found in Section IV or in the descriptions below if an online publication is available)
Wildlife Action Plan: Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need
Wisconsin Land Legacy Report: An inventory of places to meet Wisconsin’s future conservation and recreation needs
A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes
A Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin
Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan 2003-2013
Wisconsin Coastal Management Program: A Strategic Vision for the Great Lakes
Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database, State and National Register of Historic Places
Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Management Plan
Lake Superior Visual Quality Guide

Wildlife Action Plan: Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need

This plan, also known as the comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, is the result of a statewide effort to identify which native Wisconsin species are of greatest conservation need. The Action Plan presents priority conservation actions to protect the species and their habitats. The Plan also provides guidance and information, including a reference database, for government agencies, tribes, and the full range of public and private partners to use to support

their conservation efforts. The 2008 Implementation Report provides a list of priority conservation actions and accompanying maps of where the best places are in the state to undertake those actions. The CELC Plan Project Areas are most directly derived from the Conservation Opportunity Areas identified in the Implementation Report.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/plan/>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/implementation/>

#### Wisconsin Land Legacy Report: An Inventory of Places to Meet Wisconsin's Future Conservation and Recreation Needs

The Land Legacy Report describes the special places in Wisconsin that will be critical to meet conservation and recreation needs for the next fifty years. Identified over a three-year process involving the public, non-profit organizations, and natural resource professionals, these Legacy Places are, collectively, what "makes Wisconsin Wisconsin." The first step in identifying places critical to meet Wisconsin's conservation and outdoor recreation needs was to develop criteria regarding the types or characteristics of places believed to be most important. Based on public and DNR staff input, 13 criteria were developed. The second step was to use data on the distribution of various ecological attributes, human population trends, geographical features and other factors, as well as the professional judgment of DNR staff and the local knowledge of citizens, to identify the places that best met the criteria. Public involvement was central to the success of both steps.

[http://dnr.wi.gov/master\\_planning/land\\_legacy/index.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/land_legacy/index.html)

#### A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes

This three volume report is a comprehensive collection of existing data on Wisconsin's coastal wetlands including an identification and description of the most ecologically significant sites.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/wetlands/cw/>

#### A Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin

This plan identified the most important remaining natural areas, critical species habitat areas, aquatic areas, geological areas, and archaeological sites in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region, and the recommended means for their protection and management. The plan proposed the public or private protection of 40 natural areas of statewide or greater significance, and 110 Critical Species Habitat sites. The plan is currently being updated.

<http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/NaturalResources/RegionalNaturalAreasPlan.htm>

#### Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan 2003-2013

This plan will guide the management of sport and commercial fisheries in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan during the years 2003 through 2013. It provides data and information about coastal and estuarine fisheries resources. The Plan is presented in outline format, moving from broad goals to specific tactics. Within each of four goals, objectives are listed. For each objective, one or more problems are identified, and for each problem, one or more tactics are suggested. The four goals address the following categories: Ecosystem, Sport Fishing, Commercial Fishing, and Science-based Management.

[http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/LMIFMP\\_2003-2013.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/lakemich/LMIFMP_2003-2013.pdf)

#### Wisconsin Coastal Management Program: A Strategic Vision for the Great Lakes

The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) program document identifies the state's policy goals for coastal and estuarine resource protection, and provides the framework for the integration of the state agencies that address the variety of coastal management issues.

<http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=7039>

#### Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database and State and National Register of Historic Places

The Wisconsin Historical Society collects and organizes information regarding historic structures, archaeological sites and burials located within the state. The Division of Historic Preservation is the official state clearinghouse and repository for records pertaining to all such properties, and is by statute responsible for administering, managing, and preserving this information.

This information is accessible online through the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD). The WHPD application allows users to search the most up-to-date versions of the Society's database inventories, including the Archaeological Sites Inventory (ASI), Architectural History Inventory (AHI), and the Bibliography of Archaeological Reports (BAR).

Source Documents for Project Areas:

#### Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Management Plan

The management plan describes the Reserve and how it will be managed by the University of Wisconsin - Extension, in cooperation with its partners, from 2010 to 2015. The plan provides an overview of key management issues for the Reserve during its first five years of operation. In addition, the plan contains the collective vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, objectives, and outcomes for the Lake Superior NERR.

<http://lsnerr.uwex.edu/docs.html>

#### Lake Superior Visual Quality Guide

This publication by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission is intended to serve as a general guide to protecting the scenic resources and aesthetic quality of Wisconsin's Lake Superior south shore. This publication does not attempt to assess scenic beauty, but rather to identify known and potential scenic resources and to suggest methods for protecting and preserving the scenic beauty of this unique environment.

<ftp://doafp04.doa.state.wi.us/doadocs/LakeSuperiorVisualQualityProject-small.pdf>

### **III. State Process for Implementing the CELCP**

#### **A. Identification of state lead agency.**

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) is the lead agency responsible for the development and implementation of Wisconsin's CELC Plan. The DOA is an executive branch agency that provides policy development and technical assistance to the Governor and other decision makers. The WCMP administers Coastal Management Grants in collaboration with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council (WCMC) and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), U.S. Department of Commerce, through funding provided under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

#### **B. Agencies eligible to hold title to property acquired through the CELCP.**

NOAA guidelines require CELCP funds to be awarded to the state lead agency (WCMP). The WCMP may then allocate grants or make sub-awards to other relevant state agencies, local governments, or entities eligible for financial assistance under section 306(A) of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). If preferable, NOAA can also make a grant award directly to a sub-recipient. Eligible recipients of CELCP funds are local units of governments, state agencies, public colleges and universities, regional planning commissions serving coastal areas, and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. NOAA has defined eligible applicants as state agencies (which includes colleges and universities of the University of Wisconsin System), "or local governments as defined at 15 CFR 24.3, or entities eligible for assistance under section 306A(e) of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (16 U.S.C. 1455a(e)), provided that each has the authority to acquire and manage land for conservation purposes." Eligible agencies have the ability to hold land or interest in land and a mission that is consistent with conservation. Refer to the annual state and Federal funding announcements for further explanation of eligibility, especially regarding in-kind match.

#### **C. State nomination process.**

The following process will be followed to solicit, review, and select projects for nomination to NOAA for funding through the CELC Program.

##### **Project Solicitation**

Upon the announcement by NOAA of a funding opportunity for CELC Program grants, the WCMP will solicit project applications from state, local, and tribal agency partners. Depending on the timing of the NOAA funding announcement (see the NOAA website, <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/welcome.html>, for current information), the state project solicitation may be run concurrently with the Coastal Management Grant process. Eligible applicants should submit proposals to WCMP, which will submit project applications to NOAA for consideration by the national CELC Program. As specified in the NOAA CELC Program Final Guidelines, projects including several separate and distinct phases may be submitted in phases, but any succeeding phases must compete against other proposals in the year submitted.

## Review Process

Following an eligibility review by WCMP staff, a panel of technical reviewers will assess proposals and assign points using evaluation criteria. A project's average score will guide the development of funding recommendations by WCMP staff. Staff funding recommendations will also be based on consideration of reviewer comments, the applicant's past performance completing projects funded by the WCMP, and a balanced allocation of limited grant funds among fifteen coastal counties.

The technical review panel will consist of three to five people with the following representation:

- One representative from WCMP
- One representative from WDNR
- One representative from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council, to be determined by the Council Chairperson.
- Other reviewers as needed to be determined by the WCMP

## Process for Scoring Projects

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked relative to how well they address the following criteria:

### 1. Relevance to the national CELC Program goals

The national CELC Program goals are described in Appendix E and in the NOAA funding announcement for each year that CELC Program funds are available. The applications will be required to be submitted in the format required by the current NOAA funding announcement.

### 2. Relevance to the Wisconsin CELC priorities.

Applications will be based on how well a project addresses the state CELCP conservation needs (Section B) and whether the project is located within an identified project area (Section C). The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that projects address statewide coastal resource conservation priorities.

### 3. Projects with a high likelihood of success.

Projects with the following characteristics are likely to be successful:

- Proposed long-term uses and management are compatible with the ecological, recreational, conservation, historical/cultural, and aesthetic values of the area.
- Lands that can be effectively and efficiently managed over long-term (e.g., minimal invasive species impacts are expected, surrounding lands are managed in a compatible manner for the long-term conservation of the area's values).
- The project is coordinated with other conservation planning efforts, and the protection of lands through CELCP complements efforts by other state, Federal, and local governments, and non-profit conservation organizations.

- The project can be executed within the performance period required by the CELC Program, with consideration of project budget, presence of a willing seller, transaction documentation, etc.

4. Projects that directly advance the goals, objectives, and implementation of the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.

Projects must be consistent with, and advance the goals and objectives of, Wisconsin's Coastal Management Program. The WCMP is dedicated to preserving and making accessible the natural and historic resources of Wisconsin's Great Lakes Coasts. The program works cooperatively with state, local and tribal government agencies and non-profits in managing the ecological, economic and aesthetic assets of the Great Lakes and their coastal areas.

Projects may meet this priority by:

- Protecting important coastal areas (as described in Section C of this Plan) that are under a high threat of conversion to non-conservation purposes.
- Supporting the protection goals of a local or regional watershed planning effort.

## **IV. Coordination and Public involvement**

### **A. Interagency Coordination.**

The WCMP formed an advisory committee to guide development of the CELC Plan, including defining the scope of lands and types of land to be included in the CELC Plan, determining conservation needs and threats of CELC planning areas, conservation priorities for the state's coastal and estuarine areas, and a process for soliciting and nominating projects for consideration by the national CELC grant program. Advisory committee members represented state agencies, regional planning commissions, local governments, the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council, and nonprofit conservation organizations. A list of advisory committee members can be found in Appendix F.

The advisory committee met three times from November 2005 to April 2006 to discuss the scope of the CELC Plan. WCMP contracted with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide state and regional land conservation plans and GIS information for the state's coastal counties.

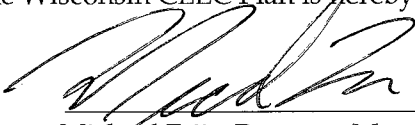
### **B. Public Involvement.**

The CELC Plan incorporated several existing plans which had been subject to extensive public involvement, review and comment. Public review of the CELC Plan consisted of a 30-day comment period ending June 30, 2006, and public notice publication. The plan was also distributed to interested parties via the advisory committee, the Coastal Management Council, email distribution through the Great Lakes Information Network, and posting on the DOA website. No public comments were submitted.

## V. Certification of Consistency and Plan Approval

The Wisconsin Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan was prepared by the lead state agency, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Coastal Management Program, which is responsible for administering the federal consistency provision of the Coastal Zone Management Act. The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program has determined that Wisconsin's CELC Plan is consistent with the enforceable policies of the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.

The Wisconsin CELC Plan is hereby approved by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.

  
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Michael Friis, Program Manager

10/14/2011  
Date



## IV. Literature Cited

**Epstein, E., W. Smith, and E. Judziewicz. 1997. Priority Wetland Sites of Wisconsin's Lake Superior Basin. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Bureau of Endangered Resources. Madison, WI.**

(see <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/publications/cw/>)

*An identification of specific coastal wetland sites of highest ecological quality including comprehensive descriptions and maps of each.*

**Merryfield, N. 2000. A data compilation and assessment of coastal wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Madison, WI.**

(see <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/publications/cw/>)

*A comprehensive collection of existing data on Wisconsin's coastal wetlands including an identification and description of the most ecologically significant sites. The report also documents existing data gaps. Three volumes.*

**Pohlman, John D., Gerald A. Bartelt, Andrew C. Hanson III, Paul H. Scott, and Craig D. Thompson (Editors). 2006. Wisconsin Land Legacy Report: An inventory of places to meet Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison, WI.**

(see [http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master\\_planning/land\\_legacy/report.html](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/master_planning/land_legacy/report.html))

*A comprehensive identification of places considered by the public and DNR staff to be most critical in meeting conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years in Wisconsin. Includes descriptions of all 229 "Legacy Places." 250 pages.*

**Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. 2010. Amendment to the Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. Waukesha, WI.**

(see <http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/pr/pr-042-natural-areas-crit-species-habitat-amendment.pdf>)

*A highly detailed evaluation of the most significant ecological sites in the most rapidly landscape in the state. 531 pages.*

### **Additional Planning and Assessment Documents used to Determine CELCP Priorities:**

**Epstein, E. 1997. Biotic Inventory of the St. Louis River Estuary and Associated Lands. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Bureau of Endangered Resources. Madison, WI.**

*An inventory completed to better understand existing natural resources as well as management and protection options for one of Wisconsin's most significant estuaries. 42 pages.*

**Epstein, E., W. Smith, and E. Judziewicz. 1997. Wisconsin Lake Superior Coastal Wetlands Evaluation. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Bureau of Endangered Resources. Madison, WI.**

*The report represents a comprehensive, landscape scale inventory effort to evaluate the coastal wetlands and to examine the Wisconsin portion of the Lake Superior Basin. 330 pages.*

**Gathering Waters Conservancy. 2003. Landscapes of Opportunity: A Regional Conservation Plan for Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin. Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance. (see [http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docs\\_view2.asp?docid=5699](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docs_view2.asp?docid=5699))**

*This plan identifies important natural resource areas within Wisconsin's Lake Michigan basin. These places harbor the most important land and water habitats, and provide the greatest opportunities for leveraging financial and institutional resources for protecting land and water habitats.*

**Judziewicz, E. and David Kopitzke. 1998. Wisconsin Lake Michigan Island Plant Survey. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources. Madison, WI.**

*An in-depth plant survey of islands in the northern portion of Lake Michigan (primarily within or near Door County) resulting in a published paper in The Michigan Botanist (1999).*

**The Conservation Fund et al. 2001. Conservation Plan for Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.**

*Among other things, a land protection plan concentrated in three watersheds (Menomonee and Root Rivers and Oak Creek) designed to improve water quality in Lake Michigan.*

**WI Natural Heritage Inventory database of Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern species and high quality natural communities.**

*The State of Wisconsin's portion of the international inventory database of element occurrences that is coordinated by NatureServe.*

**Wisconsin Department of Administration. 2003. Wisconsin Coastal Management Program: A Strategic Vision for the Great Lakes. Wisconsin Department of Administration. Madison, WI.**

*The federally-approved program for implementing the Coastal Zone Management Act in Wisconsin.*

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2005. Wildlife Action Plan: Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Publication number ER-641 2005. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Madison, WI.**

(see <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/>)

*This plan, also known as the comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, is the result of a statewide effort to identify which of our native Wisconsin species are of greatest conservation need. The Action Plan presents priority conservation actions to protect the species and their habitats. 1200 pages.*

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2005. Wisconsin Lake Superior Basin Brook Trout Plan. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ashland, WI.**

([http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ashland/basinbktplan/Final\\_WI\\_Brook\\_Trout\\_Plan\\_May\\_2005.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/ashland/basinbktplan/Final_WI_Brook_Trout_Plan_May_2005.pdf))

*This plan describes the life history, threats, and management of brook trout in Wisconsin's portion of the Lake Superior basin and its tributaries, and suggests a goal, objectives and tactics to protect and rehabilitate depleted populations. It was jointly written by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

**Administrative Report No. 56, Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan 2003-2013. January 2004. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Madison, WI.**

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Species of greatest conservation need occurring in the coastal area.
- Appendix B: Recognized Natural Communities
- Appendix C: Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan: Priority Conservation Actions and Conservation Opportunity Areas
- Appendix D: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Plan Recommendations for Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitats
- Appendix E: National criteria for projects and project areas
- Appendix F: List of advisory committee members