

NEWS RELEASE
Public Invited to Land and Water Plan Listening Sessions

Residents of Chippewa County are invited to attend one of three (3) listening sessions being held by the Chippewa County Dept. of Land Conservation & Forest Management to explain proposed updates being made to the Chippewa County Land and Water Resource Management Plan.

The plan is used by the County to guide its conservation and natural resource programs, and to coordinate its efforts with cooperating state and federal agencies. The plan update has been developed using input from a Citizens Advisory Group representing a wide-range of farm, forest, economic development, and environmental interests.

The listing sessions are being held to explain issues of local concern, and to present recommendations for future program focus. Opportunities for public comment will be provided.

The sessions will be held Tuesday, February 19, 2019, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Goetz Town Hall on Highway O, north of Cadott; on Thursday, February 21, 2019, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Bloomer Town Hall on Highway 40, north of Bloomer. A third listening session will be held on Wednesday evening, February 20, 2019, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in Room 3 of the Chippewa County Courthouse.

The plan clarifies how the County will use conservation programs to respond to climate change, and how it will work to control nonpoint pollution to surface and groundwater from both agricultural and non-agricultural sources.

In agricultural areas, public funds will be used to establish stream buffers, restore wetlands, and to assist producers to meet state mandated agricultural performance standards. This voluntary effort will be augmented by a regulatory program, administered using the County's Manure Storage and Livestock Facility Ordinance, and its Zoning and Sanitary Ordinances.

The plan explains the County's intended approach to preserve blocks of agricultural "working lands" and forests, using "Agricultural Enterprise Areas" (AEA's) and voluntary conservation agreements. This approach to preserving working lands will be augmented through the use of agricultural zoning, if adopted by individual towns.

In urbanizing areas, the County will work with municipalities in the Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire urban area to administer a joint storm water management program to meet state storm water permit requirements.

Importantly, as part of its program efforts, the County intends to place greater emphasis on community outreach, targeted education, and civic engagement, working through existing educational institutions and local conservation organizations.

With regard to the management of public lands, the County will continue to manage the Chippewa County Forest for timber production, resource protection, and public use using designated management areas, as defined in the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In doing so, it is recommended that the County will continue to work with state agencies and nonprofit organizations to purchase select parcels or conservation easements from willing sellers with land located in or adjacent the County Forest Blocking Boundary.

For more information about the upcoming listening sessions or the Chippewa County Land and Water Plan revisions, please contact the Chippewa County Dept. of Land Conservation & Forest Management at 715-726-7920. Copies of the existing plan and core elements of the plan upgrade are available for public review upon request, and can be viewed on the Internet at www.co.chippewa.wi.us/lcfm.

The general public, with an interest in conservation and local environmental quality, are encouraged to mark their calendars and to attend one of these sessions.