

# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project Third Round of Community Meetings Report



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**Fall 2012**

# MILLE LACS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 3<sup>rd</sup> ROUND OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS REPORT FALL 2012



## Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners

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As part of the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project, a series of three identically formatted community meetings were held in September, 2012 at the following locations and dates across Mille Lacs County:

Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. 7:00 PM at Princeton Township Hall  
Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. 9:00 AM at Historic Mille Lacs County Courthouse  
Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. 7:00 PM at Wahkon City Hall

The agenda and meeting format were identical at these meetings:

- 1) Welcome – all were welcomed to the meetings.
- 2) Introductions – all were introduced; facilitators, staff and participants.
- 3) Background – a presentation was made regarding what a comprehensive plan is, the planned steps for creating a new one of Mille Lacs County, work already completed, work remaining and next steps. Questions were answered as they arose. A copy of this presentation was handed out for participants to take.
- 4) Gathering of input– several questions were asked to participants in an effort to garner input on a variety of topics. A SWOT Analysis was undertaken, and participants were asked to write their answers on provided slips of paper. The facilitator also asked everyone to comment verbally – comments were written down and both written and verbal comments are included in this report. Questions asked of participants include:
  - SWOT Analysis was undertaken for the following topics:
    - o Agriculture and Forestry
    - o Land UseThis SWOT analysis will also be available on the county’s website for residents to complete.
- 5) Goals and Objectives – Draft objectives and goals recently completed by the Ad-Hoc Citizen Task Forces on the topics of Environment & Energy, Economic Development, Transportation, Recreation & Tourism, and Public Safety were presented. Participants were provided forms for their comments and opinions on these draft goals and policies. A form will also be available on the county’s website for residents to provide their comments on these draft goals and policies. .
- 6) Questions? – Any final questions participants had were answered.

Agendas handed out that included the email address to send to for enrolling in the project’s email list-serve for updates on the projects, as well as Mille Lacs County’s website with information on this project.

This third round of Community Meetings were promoted through the media (newspapers, flyers), as well as emails sent to those on the project’s email distribution list, cities, chambers, businesses and other stakeholders.

Written and verbal input from the meetings and online questionnaires have been transcribed and are categorized by topic and meeting location, and are as follows:



## Agriculture / Forestry in Mille Lacs County

Princeton Township

### Strengths / Opportunities

Excellent land – agricultural in areas

Open spaces for new production available

Be sensitive to ag uses – would be beneficial

Encourage forestry

Beautiful farms & forests

Land available to be developed for crop and animal production

Much wooded, low land area in county

Trees can be sold as economic product with value

Open space

Great farming

### Weakness / Threats

Some open areas could be productive

Agricultural subsidies

Too many old oak trees have been cut – it would be great to regulate what trees/areas are being cut

Too much car traffic on agriculturally traveled roads – danger to operator of machines and cars

Caution on restrictions because of extreme nature enthusiasts

Decreasing value of land

Commissioners not being informed

Resources being used up – i.e. forests

Apathy of the people



Politics (decisions made by political agenda)  
Lack of citizen involvement  
Invasive species  
Drainage  
Process for conditional use is cumbersome and slow  
Conservationists  
Management  
Gov't regulations vs. property rights  
Gov't regs vs. property rights  
Ditches in poor shape

#### Milaca – Historic Courthouse

##### Strengths / Opportunities

Beautiful tracts of forest for all to enjoy  
Hardworking people who care about the land and are trying to keep the land good for years/generations to com  
Identify regulations for public and make available  
Keep land for farmers to farm  
Keep farm land in agriculture  
Continue to support existing ag businesses  
Ample supply of land and forest

##### Weakness / Threats

Many people are not educated on public lands that are available to them  
Ensure roads meet the needs of heavy farm equipment



Ask what are the unique needs of our farming community that are not being met?

Identify regulations for public and make available

Infected trees

Better plan needed to manage these resources

## City of Wahkon

### Strengths / Opportunities

Value of wetlands? Getting more for hunting land than agriculture land

Wetlands & forests preserve animal and plant life and filter water

There is still farmland in use and unused but saved, opportunity to feed populace close to home

Much of the US farmland has been paved, developed into housing or commerce – ask Michigan residents how they feel that they have lost a huge amount of their orchards to ‘development’ other than farming

Enough Available land

New ag technologies

Tax equalization for farm land from north to south

Variety of ag items to grow – grapes, beef, crops

Available forest land with value

% of wetlands left from 1900

Many acres of unharvested timber

Land in north end of the county is not good – only for marginal farming

We do have a lot of deciduous trees

Our forests need to be better managed

### Weakness / Threats

Much of our timber is taken out and nothing (revenue, repairs, plantings) put back

Markets need to be developed for meat processing, need more state inspectors



New weeds and bugs

Urban growth = complaints

Too many wetland rules for farming

Markets

Lack of forestry plans on private property

Less competition between ag suppliers, few & far between

Limited production

Ag. Jobs

Too many wetlands, net wetland acres have increased in the state, not decreased

Too stringent of wetland rules for farming

Our forests are denuded and not replaced

Need better water quality

Land in north end of county is not as good as land in south end of county

Land on north end of county not taxed as agriculture the same as the south end

Erratic weather

Used as farm land, but no credit for it on taxes, north end

No markets in Mille Lacs County – logs, beef, etc

Most of our productive land is south of 23

#### Online Comments

##### Strengths / Opportunities

I am not aware of there being any good agricultural land in Mille Lacs County

Agriculture/forestry is a relatively consistant/stable economic base for the community in the long term.





Environmentally conscientious

Our numerous wetland areas make agricultural use a somewhat inadvisable activity

Ag(crop & livestock) as well as forestry create employment and support industry.

No CAFO's, therefore sustainable for the environment and Mille Lacs County's natural resources

An abundance of rocks. Is there some way to market them?

Promotes sustainability of the environment as well as working towards more sustainability for the farmers

Since sustainability is such a powerful, all-encompassing, popular word, we should capitalize on it and portray Mille Lacs county as a county striving toward sustainability - in the area of economics, environment, and families.

#### Weakness / Threats

Farmers (generally federally subsidized) should not be allowed to rape the land and add to the environmental issues that exist simply because they are farmers

Forested parcels are being subdivided into parcels too small to manage effectively for wood production.

The environmental strengths of the county would disappear with the allowance of CAFO's

Both crop Ag and Forestry take long term management investments and can be harmed by quick land use changes driven by short term economics.

Forested acres being split into smaller parcels reduces the economic viability of managing that forest for wood production because it isn't practical/economical for loggers to come in and work on small parcels unless numerous parcels band together. Loggers won't come in to do a select cut on small acres which reduces too many of the larger seed trees that will allow for regeneration of the forest.

Livestock operations provide another market for the grain producers to market to. Livestock also provide a local food source to the community. Livestock operations keeps forage in the cropping systems which improves soil health and reduces erosion from cropland.



## Land Use

### Princeton Township

#### Strengths / Opportunities

Mining / aggregate resources

Convenience in location to populations and businesses

Opportunity for affordable housing

Accessible roads

Open spaces

Much underdeveloped or undeveloped land

Major transportation roads exist for commercial, industrial & Ag use

Recreational activities

Cooperation with neighboring counties

Historical sights

Lots of land – open beautiful land

Diversity of land – farms/residential/vacation properties/developed and undeveloped

Roads

Land in county that can be developed

Land in county has many types and profiles – this is important for future development of land area

Room for farm land

Recreation – fishing and water sports

Historical buildings and sites for tourism

Land for development to attract employers to the County



Weakness / Threats

Decreasing value of land

Traffic excess on certain roads

Taxes

Vacant / foreclosed properties

Pollution/contamination

Arguments Re: use of land/whose land/ how to use land

Adverse opinions regarding land use

High property taxes

Taxes are too high

Still have many homes standing vacant, we need to get people into them to increase revenue

We need to have a larger acreage to build on than we currently have

Permitting process

High property taxes

Restrictions on recreation

Ditches in poor shape

Less duplication of services

Too many restrictions on water activities

Civil leaders no promoting or “setting the table” for effective development process

Environmental impact statements / research very expensive – almost to the point of resistance

Taxes increasing

Property rights

Commissioners out of touch

Extensive permitting

Losing rural character



Affordable housing lack of  
Taxes / cost of government  
Gov. vs. private property rights  
Commissioners that are not in touch with the people  
Apathy of the people  
Politics – commissioners/gov't employees/decision makers with agendas  
More citizen involvement is needed

#### Milaca – Historic Courthouse

##### Strengths / Opportunities

Not too many regulations  
Existing regulations are good  
Better definition of regulations for public and make them available to public  
Water & Sewer in our cities for industry  
Most people we know in the county want to keep the rural rural, and com/ind in centralized areas  
New people moving/moved in with new ideas  
Natural Resources that produce economic value and recreation

##### Weakness / Threats

Too many regulations  
Need to identify and enforce non-compliant uses, both resident and business  
Need to identify and enforce IUP/CUP non-compliance  
Expand 169 corridor and change to commercial/industrial use instead of res/ag  
People that want to do whatever they want with their land versus those who want nothing to change  
Need to evaluate competing land uses with population and societal changes over the past 20ish years



Inconsistency in oversight of CUP's, IUP's etc.

New people moving/moved in with new ideas

#### City of Wahkon

#### Strengths / Opportunities

Northern Mille Lacs still has a rural feel – which is why many of us live here

Farmland, wildlife, parks

We need to keep green spaces

We can diversify

Location of land

Broad base of use

Protect our natural resources

Diversity of land in the county

Limited regulations for land use

Protection of natural resources

Fewer people than most areas

Cheap land comparatively to the south and urban areas

Too many rules and regulations so it is hard to do much

We have many acres of land that cannot be used

Could be land for wildlife

Enough land for farming – do we want our food from China

Hard to compete as small farmers

Regulation relatively limited in comparison to other areas

Very good job protecting natural resources, some over the top



## Weakness / Threats

Pressure to increase tax base threatens rural areas – a lot of people with power that say increase the tax base other than farming and ag

Many acres of unusable land

Do we want to change from rural to strip malls?

Over regulations

Poor representation or reporting of happenings in our area (media, etc) good or bad

Need better government representation of the people

County regulations different from north to south

Building homes last land use

Loss of land due to over use of regulation

Fairness of zoning

Excess wetlands

Limited productive agriculture land

Who needs permits to 'maintain' their home

Growing amount of state land off tax roles

Variable regulations township to township

Loss of own property use – regulations

Who are we protecting?

Too much spray and commercial fertilizer

Regulations

Sewage should be processed before dumping on another property – i.e. holding tanks

Unfairness of agriculture zoning, north and south of 23 disparity in zoning



## Online Comments

### Strengths / Opportunities

Highway 169 is one of our greatest resources. Make the most of it! Look at zoning along the Highway.

Potential corridor/recreational trail systems are an opportunity for recreational land use development that can be expanded into camping/hotel/restaurant opportunities.

Neighborhoods of 5-10 acre parcels will function differently than neighborhoods of smaller lots. 5-10 acre parcels require more management and imply hobby farming may occur. Hobby farming activities may require different ordinances. Small lots (less than 5 ac.) mean most activities happen inside the house and those neighborhoods might take better advantage of community green space or trail system. Each community type may have conflict with an adjacent land use such as industry.

### Weakness / Threats

Not applying County ordinances consistently. Ordinances should be complied consistently or rescinded.

Allowing residents to burn their garbage!!!! Take steps to eliminate this dangerous and harmful practice.

Residential land split sizes will effect adjacent land use compatability and could hinder economic development.

CAFO's would destroy our environmentally-friendly reputation and should not be allowed here Residents perceptions concerning their "rights" as land owners. No one should have the right to take away their neighbor's right to enjoy their own property.

ML Co has high seasonal water tables and alot of wetlands which make development while protecting ground & surface water difficult.

Porn industry businesses are not sustainable to our families and should not be allowed in the county



At the Third round of Community Meetings, draft objectives and goals from the recently completed Environment & Energy, Public Safety, Economic Development, Transportation, and Recreation & Tourism Task Forces were presented. Participants at these Community Meetings were asked to review these draft objectives and goals and comment on them.

These same draft objectives and goals were placed online on the Mille Lacs County website for public review along with a comment box for people to submit their comments on these draft objectives and goals.

The draft objectives and goals are presented, along with paper and electronic comments received.

# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan

## Economic Development Task Force

### Objectives and Goals – Draft 1

#### **Objective:**

To promote the growth and diversification of Mille Lacs County's economy, thereby developing a broad economic base.

- Promote development that will strengthen the County over the long term, through increased tax base, more jobs, and new resources being brought into the County.
- Promote Mille Lacs County as a progressive area willing to cooperate with suitable and compatible businesses and industries seeking new sites; highlight the natural amenities of the Mille Lacs County area to attract a wide range of industries.
- Promote a steady rate of commercial/industrial growth, providing additional employment opportunities requiring a broad range of knowledge and skills.
  - Encourage agriculture related businesses of a diverse nature.
  - Encourage businesses related to tourism.
  - Encourage technology businesses that create good paying jobs.





- Encourage the development of student technological skills through various events such as robotics competitions, science fairs, etc.
  - Encourage partnerships, mentorships and sponsorships between schools, private industry, non-profit groups, and tribal and local government.
- Encourage technical, post-secondary schools to establish satellites for continuing education.
- Foster the growth and expansion of broadband internet service and fiber infrastructure for business, education and private use, making it accessible to all residents of the County.
- Leverage the County’s available natural resources to promote business growth, i.e. tourism, agriculture, etc.
- Promote economic development within existing development areas; work with planning commissions to develop commercial/industrial zones in appropriate and well thought-out areas.
- Cultivate opportunities provided by being located on the US Highway 169; and State Highway 23, 27, and 95 corridors.

**Objective:**

Promote private business growth to create living wage jobs in Mille Lacs County.

- Promote creation, retention, and expansion of private business.
  - Work to create and market a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation, and attraction. Some examples of this may include various business subsidy policies, loan funds, regulatory and technical assistance, as well as partnering with chambers of commerce, non-profit agencies, and other organizations.
  - Assess the needs of local businesses, and how regulations directly impact those businesses. Study Mille Lacs County’s zoning ordinance provisions and other regulatory tools on a regular basis to minimize restrictions and barriers to business, wherever practical.
- Foster the growth and expansion of broadband internet service and fiber infrastructure for business, education, and private use in the County, making it accessible to all residents.



- Promote, cultivate, and support various suitable and compatible types of businesses including small, industrial, commercial, retail, agriculture, forestry, tourism, and others that create and retain living wage jobs within the County.
- Capitalize on opportunities provided due to County's location relative to the US Highway 169; and State Highway 23, 27, and 95 corridors.
- Market the County to bring in additional businesses, while emphasizing the County's assets in trails, natural resources, tourist revenue, arts, etc.

**Objective:**

Promote and support local small businesses (retention, creation, and expansion) within the County.

- Review Mille Lacs County's zoning ordinance provisions and other state and federal regulatory tools on a regular basis to ensure that they are compatible with small business retention, creation, and expansion.
- Promote the development and creation of broad types of businesses that meet residents' needs.
  - Provide information and tools for existing and future residents to start businesses.
  - Create local shopping opportunities to keep resources in the County.
- Work to create a "toolbox" of economic development tools to assist with small business retention, expansion, creation and attraction by coordinating available resources to make their availability known to business owners and entrepreneurs.

**Objective:**

Develop working relationships within the County to promote economic growth in new and existing development areas.

- Create an Economic Development Authority (EDA) with representation from all local government jurisdictions and each business sector within the County.
  - Retain an Economic Development staff person for Mille Lacs County who will focus on developing, retaining, and strengthening existing businesses in the County, as well as recruiting new businesses.



- Partner with local and regional business development organizations (such as GPS45:93, the East Central Regional Development Commission, and the MN Small Business Development Center) to explore new business assistance programs and learn from best practices.
- Review existing codes and regulations from a business point of view; work with EDA to make recommendations for changes to local, state, or federal rules.
- Review and pursue grant and / or loan opportunities for business development.
- Create a “toolbox” of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation, and attraction by coordinating available resources and making their availability known to business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Create and implement a County Economic Development Plan, in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Comments on Economic Development Task Force Objectives**

- Obj #1, second bullet point – suitable to whom?
- Need to define suitable and compatible in more detail
- Obj #3, second bullet point – I’m concerned at the wording, it sounds like the county will create local shopping opportunities
- The general economic development effort needs to be emphasized, without economic activity there will be no tax base to support other activities
- Consider an ongoing economic development office in the plan
- Need to promote use of technology and proximity to Minneapolis/St. Paul to support economic activity
- Any thought to try to attract twin cities regional support industries or facilities
- Economic development should be first priority
- Change good paying jobs to living wage jobs
- Need to define on a regular basis in regard to review of tools
- Increase jobs
- This sounds great.



- We need to include the fact that both Princeton and Milaca have airports that could help attract business and industry. Sondra Erickson
- A goal stated by the community is to keep porn establishments out of the area. This was not addressed in the objectives and goals. In order to keep the porn industry out and welcome families, it is essential to include the fact that Mille Lacs County is and needs to be marketed as being family-friendly. The community also wants more businesses and yet we want to preserve the environmental quality we, as well as our tourists enjoy. Therefore, we need to portray Mille Lacs county as being environmentally friendly as well as progressive. I propose the following additions to the second bullet point (in capital letters): "Promote Mille Lacs County as a progressive area THAT IS BOTH FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY willing to cooperate with suitable and compatible businesses and industries seeking new sites..." .
- Need to focus on how to bring business into the county or to expand what we already have. make sure businesses are all being treated as businesses, including taxes paid and regulations followed by all Make sure people have access to education opportunities Look at county programs and see if the assistance programs can work job programs and work training more into them for all
- Objectives look good. It will be very important for the County to work collaboratively with the cities on these goals. Review of existing zoning will be very important...currently very challenging for businesses to come into the County.
- Sound good.
- Very good
- Agree that this is necessary. Don't forget collaboration with local school districts.
- Looks great! More efforts need to be made on economic development in the county - hiring a person to focus on this area is important.
- I would like to see you strengthen the language in this document around family-friendly businesses. We need to make it clear that we do not wish to have pornography, strip clubs, and other family destroying businesses in Mille Lacs County.
- It seems thus far the rules and regulations are upper most in peoples views. The solution in my view is we should be more careful in implementing these regulations. We need them but lets get rid of the small nit picking items.
- If one goes around my part of the county, some places look like dog patch, some people hardly can afford the broken window let alone the price of a permit.



- Perhaps we could look at a number of smaller factories instead of trying to get a larger concern, it works in some counties.
- We have a lot of skilled workers but they cannot afford to work for the wages paid in our county.
- Taxes seem to be a deterrent for small businesses to get started here along with the reg's
- We really need more small farmers
- Work with existing businesses to learn what brought them to the County, what keeps them here, and then expand on that to continue to keep, expand those businesses, as well as work to bring new business into the County. Tap into our strengths.



# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan

## Environment & Energy Task Force

### Objectives and Goals – Draft 1

#### **Objective:**

Balance human activity with the natural environment within Mille Lacs County.

- Create a variety of opportunities for human activity in a healthful and cost efficient manner.
  - Provide amenities that are in balance with the natural environment.
  - Consider development of an amenity plan for future use.
  - Promote the County's natural resources as a driver for the local economy, working with tourism, environmental, hunting, farming, nonprofit, advocacy groups; local governmental units; and educational institutions.
  - Maintain the natural beauty of the environment that nourishes the human spirit.
- Balance between the regulation and protection of our natural resources.
  - Review the wild and scenic boundaries of the Rum River and make recommendations to the regulating body (such as Planning Commission and County Board).
  - Partner with the private business community to determine the best use for shoreline property, while maintaining its environmental integrity.
  - Work with both internal and external partners to review existing codes and regulations, as well as best practices to achieve minimal regulation while conserving our natural resources.
  - Develop a plan to best manage wildlife corridors and existing green spaces.
- Maintain viability of wildlife habitat.
  - Work with partners such as DNR and Mille Lacs County Land Services Office to ensure impact to wildlife is considered when planning future development.
  - Maintain viability of wetlands.



- Sustainably manage forest resources for economic benefit, wildlife habitat, and recreation.
- Review land use controls and update as necessary, in relation to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Establish a Natural Resources Committee, composed of elected officials, residents, and key strategic partners.
  - Develop a natural resources protection plan that encompasses and ties together other natural resource and land use plans.

**Objective:**

Preserve and protect the water supply and water quality within the County.

- Work with partners to control aquatic invasive species.
  - Work with local and state partners to develop best management practices, education, and implementation plans.
  - Initiate mitigation activities, and look for ways to stop further infestation.
- Protect drinking water supplies from contamination and depletion.
  - Promote well head protection planning.
  - Review land use regulations regarding the withdrawal of water from aquifers for development.
- Preserve surface water from pollution, runoff, and other sources of contamination.
  - Review County ordinances for setbacks and other requirements.
  - Collaborate with partners and stakeholders on a natural resource protection education program.

**Objective:**

Protect and support agricultural food supply opportunities, and work to ensure their long-term viability.

- Support all agricultural businesses and marketing opportunities for locally produced foods.



- Develop plan working with local growers and markets for long-term sustainability of small agricultural businesses.
- Further research grant opportunities related to the local food supply.
- Protect top soil from erosion and degradation by working with stakeholders.
- Promote educational opportunities on local agriculture, including locally produced foods.

**Objective:**

Promote and further study existing and alternative energy sources.

- Review viability and encourage growth of all alternative renewable energy sources within the County.
- Promote energy efficiency and energy conservation.

**Objective:**

Protect Mille Lacs County's air from pollution, to maintain air quality for future generations.

- Work with local, state, and federal partners to develop plans for mitigating existing pollution and preventing future pollution threats in the County.
- Mitigate sources of air pollution.
  - Reduce particulate counts from the burning of plastics, garbage, and other contaminants.
  - Develop education plan for residents about open burning and other contributors to air pollution.

**Objective:**

Encourage the proper disposal of solid and hazardous wastes.

- Promote recycling and reuse.
  - Provide education and information for residents.
  - Encourage private haulers to implement recycling programs.





- Work with private sector to explore private enterprise opportunities related to re-use and recycling.
- Promote solid waste disposal options in place of open burning.
- Provide / promote a variety of options for hazardous waste disposal.
  - Develop ongoing educational programs and disposal options for residents.
  - Work with the private sector to explore private enterprise opportunities for hazardous waste disposal.

### **Comments on Environment & Energy Task Force Objectives**

- In order to uphold this, there should be a ban on CAFO's
- Need to review aggregate resources and include as a valuable natural resource
- Natural resources are very important. Enforcement is the key. There are currently many residents illegally burning garbage; however, this unfortunately doesn't seem to be a concern of the County.
- Must add mining to bullet point #2
- Continue effort to protect environmental sensitive areas
- The county should work with the DNR on fairer fishing regulations so everyone has a chance to keep a fish
- Explore bio-mass energy & wind energy
- Looks good.
- We need to strongly discourage Confined Animal Feeding Operations
- I heard tell get those burning barrels out of the county, but if I owned a garbage concern, I would say the same thing.
- Things are changing for the better, the environment is getting cleaner, our water is better; however we cannot keep dumping sewage waste on our farm land. Let's process it first, we have the know how.
- We have much wood and pete for burning but instead we are destroying it
- Wind energy – wind milles – scrap wood, it could be used for energy
- What does the balance between regulation and protection mean?



# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan

## Public Safety Task Force

### Objectives and Goals – Draft 1

#### **Objective:**

Develop partnerships to study and decrease drug usage and drug-related public safety issues

- Develop ongoing partnerships among county, city, tribal, state, medical, education, public safety, social services, and associated elected officials to study, develop, and recommend a workable plan to address drug usage issues in Mille Lacs County.
  - Increase awareness of drug activity
  - Reduce drug activity within the County
  - Support prevention programs
  - Review and recommend best practices related to prevention and support programs

#### **Objective:**

Develop partnerships to study and decrease Gang Related Activity and related public safety issues

- Develop ongoing partnerships among county, city, tribal, state, medical, education, public safety, social services, and associated elected officials to study, develop, and recommend a workable plan to address gang activity issues in Mille Lacs County.
  - Increase awareness of gang activity
  - Reduce gang activity within the County
  - Support prevention programs
  - Review and recommend best practices related to prevention and support programs



**Objectives:**

Increase public awareness related to crime prosecution rates

- Develop an ongoing public education media campaign related to crime in the County
  - Encourage and educate legislators on related issues impacting the County
  - Recommend activities and other ways to reduce recidivism
  - Develop ongoing crime prevention programs with all affected parties within the County

**Objective:**

Strive to increase the safety of all Mille Lacs County citizens

- Increase education and public awareness relating to abuse in the County, with an emphasis on Elder, Child, and Domestic Abuse.
- Support prevention programs related to abuse.
- Develop joint (governmental units, private, non-profit, etc) planning efforts to address domestic abuse issues in the County

**Objective:**

Provide ongoing support for the prevention of juvenile crime

- Support planned youth activities within the County
  - Support plans to reduce recidivism jointly with all local governmental units in County.

**Objective:**

Continue to support the interoperability of all public safety organizations which operate within the County.



### Comments on Public Safety Task Force Objectives

- Deputies should treat all people equal, not target few
- We have too good of social services in this county. Costs more for the bad people than is spent on schools and children
- Stress the public safety objectives and goals the general public will see as a benefit
- Looks super.
- In order to make a safer community, all groups will have to work together and get over the turf protection of whether it is elected, city, or otherwise. The problems of drugs and violence exist in the whole county. try working together will all partners for once, as the law enforcement community does not exist in a vacuum even though they really really try to be special
- Generally, public safety targets relatively small population groups (i.e. drug users, gangs)
- Show how efforts are meeting public safety objectives
- Increase and or enforce punishment of drug offenders
- We have a good law enforcement policy in Mille Lacs County. Our people work very hard at it. In order to have a good policy, it must give our Sheriff the power that was invested in him and his staff (and it is vast). Perhaps our judges should be more hard on the law breakers instead of undermining the local sheriff. It can work to all our good but we have to let him to what we elected him for. Perhaps better roads more diverse drivers training, obey said laws. We have to support our men we elect. As a tax payer I think we as of now, get our monies worth. I think as of now we have good report with said department.



# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan

## Transportation Task Force

### Objectives and Goals – Draft 1

#### **Objective:**

Maintain existing county roads.

- Widen shoulders for active transportation, vehicle recovery, etc using available resources
- Maintain road ratings to road specific standards using available resources.
- Work to lessen forces that negatively impact road conditions (enforcement of weight restrictions, etc.)
- Prioritize roads with highest average daily traffic count.

#### **Objective:**

Repair bridges.

- Repair deficient bridges in the county, with priority given to those with the greatest safety concerns.

#### **Objective:**

Control, preserve, and expand county road right-of-ways.

- Develop long term plans to control, preserve, and expand county road right-of-ways consistent to standard widths.

#### **Objective:**

Support active transportation options for biking and walking when feasible.

- Promote stakeholders efforts towards safe walking/biking opportunities.



**Objective:**

Promote public transportation where feasible

- Promote incentives for private business development.
- Support stakeholder group activities towards alternative transit opportunities.

**Objective:**

Maintain safety as a transportation priority.

- Solicit feedback from residents on safety concerns.

**Comments on Transportation Task Force Objectives**

- Need to study and develop a mix of CSAH's, county roads and township roads to maximize state aid revenue
- Dedicate funds to repair/maintain county roads
- Non motorized and public transportation need to be self-sufficient financially
- I don't feel a great enough effort is made to promote public transportation
- Have a better drive to get grants for the county and use them, not let them go back to urban areas just because more people live there. How can we get people to move here is we don't provide trails and the funds to maintain them?
- Makes sense.
- Public transportation in Mille Lacs County is sadly lacking (i.e. we have none). In order to get a transportation agenda started it will take vast amounts of money which the County doesn't have, but it can get it from the taxpayers in the form of a tax (but who can sell such an idea).
- One problem I see trying to get such a program is our modern fast cars, we can get from A to B in a matter of minutes, why wait for a bus? It could work from Isle to maybe St. Cloud is 8-10 dollars in gas. Or a system such as a non-profit. If we could fill a bus with a cheaper fare but it must be close to full in order to succeed. I am over 80, I've seen our bus system go flat from a full bus 2X per day to very few – economics just isn't in this.



- County department is fully staffed, does a great job maintaining our roads. Road usage has changed and residents need to understand that if they want different roads than those that exist in a rural environment, the costs will be significant to all taxpayers.
- Maintain roads equally, north end as well as south
- Need to better define the level of maintenance expected on county roads



# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan

## Recreation and Tourism Task Force

### Objectives and Goals – Draft 1

#### **Objective:**

Promote and support Mille Lacs County tourism.

- Increase revenues by promoting tourism within the County.
- Develop partnerships with private, non-profit, and governmental units to promote tourism and recreation.
- Work with and educate state legislators, departments and the general public on topics pertaining to recreation and tourism as it relates to the County.

#### **Objective:**

Maintain public hunting and fishing access within the County.

- Work with DNR and other stakeholders in maintenance and improvements at public hunting and fishing locations.
- Help promote public recreation opportunities (signs, websites, etc.).
- Encourage better way of defining public accesses to hunting and fishing areas.

#### **Objective:**

Promote and support recreational opportunities within the County.

- Encourage establishment/expansion of privately owned recreational businesses.
- Continue partnership with DNR and other stakeholders in an effort to preserve our County's natural resources.
- Promote and help to preserve the County's historical and cultural assets.





- Support the creation of a historical and cultural asset inventory, and use it as a tourism driver.
- Consider the development of a park and trails plan, including a cost/benefit analysis.
- Explore opportunities for creating or expanding County parks and trails.
- Explore incentives for private natural resource protection.

**Objective:**

Responsibly utilize the Wild and Scenic Rum River corridor within the County.

- Encourage DNR and other stakeholders to explore the creation of primitive camping sites.
- Encourage establishment/expansion of privately owned recreational businesses.
- Work with DNR and other stakeholders on developing recreational uses that will have a minimal impact on the river.

**Objective:**

Improve connections between people and destinations in the County.

- Assess and promote regional trail systems, and consider possible connections with proposed County trails.

**Objective:**

Promote and support Mille Lacs Lake as a recreation and tourism destination in the County.

- Promote and support tourism in the county
- Promote natural resources in the county
- Promote cultural resources in the county

**Objective:**

Promote and capitalize on location on Highway 169 corridor and volume of traffic.



### Comments on Recreation & Tourism Task Force Objectives

- Don't let the tribe have so much influence in changing the environment. Like destroying Onamia Lake, that used to be actually fishable
- I think the wording of objective #1, third bullet point, should say government departments
- I agree with what's been said and written about recreation and tourism however I don't think we can on this north end of the county depend on tourism to fill our coffers. Our gem of a lake will soon be a private gated concern. As of now there is no lake shore left to develop a family vacation spot. There is no access for a person to swim.
- I know we can't look back but really the County missed the point years ago
- Having only two resorts left in Kathio Township doesn't help.
- Another thing, we are too close to the twin cities. We have the skilled labor but no place for them.
- Promotion of tourism needs to work hand in hand with economic development
- Promote clear definition of public lands (locations and restrictions)
- Maintain and upkeep improvement of our recreation trails
- Great job!
- For cultural and historical activities - all the historical societies should and need to work as a single cohesive unit to protect the assets of the county. The goals of promoting and using these resources would be a good fit for a cohesive county historical society - as the single, divided groups are not getting it done.
- Revenues – what type and whose
- What departments – state, county, etc
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Bullet under 2<sup>nd</sup> objective is clumsy, are we improving finding the access or determining what is a public access?

