

Natural, Cultural and Community Resources

The Town of Sumpter is fortunate to have abundant recreational, natural and cultural opportunities. A summary of the natural and historical attributes found in the Town of Sumpter provides insights and a basis for preservation programs, growth management practices and potential tourism opportunities. Map #5: *Community Resources*, shows many of the areas resources and general locations.

General Soils Information

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development on certain soils include: slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes and high water tables. Soil suitability is also a key factor in determining agricultural suitability, previously discussed in the Agricultural Resources Inventory (Map 3: *Land Capability Classification*). Based on the Soil Survey for Sauk County (1980 - USDA Soil Conservation Service) soils in the Study Area can be grouped into four broad categories:

La Farge-Nordan-Gale and Baraboo-Rock Outcrop Group

This group is located in the Baraboo Range and in the south-western portions of the Sumpter. These areas are dominated by moderate to well-drained soils. These soils are medium textured with sandstone or quartzite bedrock at 20 to 40 inches. These are gently sloping to very steep soils on unglaciated uplands. Most areas are used for cultivated crops and pasture, the gentler slopes having good potential and the moderate slopes having fair potential for cultivating crops. All slopes have good potential for trees, the steeper slopes being woodland already.

McHenry-St. Charles Group

This group is located on the eastern half of the Town of Sumpter. These areas are dominated by well-drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and subsoil; underlain by glacial till. These are gently sloping to steep soils on glaciated upland. The soils are moderately permeable with high available water capacity. Crop cultivating potential is good on the gently sloping soils, with erosion control provided, fair on sloping soils, and poor on steep slopes. The potential for residential development is good, by slope is a moderate or severe limitation for traditional septic tank absorption fields in some areas.

Dickenson-Gotham-Dakota Group

This group is located primarily along Otter Creek and is dominated by well-drained to excessively-drained soils that have a medium to coarse textured soils underlain by outwash sand. These are nearly level to steep soils. These soils have good potential for cultivated crops, if irrigated and protected from erosion soil blowing. The potential for residential development is good, but ground water pollution from septic tank absorption fields is a hazard.

Ettrick-Fluvaquents and wet-Curran Group

These soils are found along Highway 12 and along Hwy C below the Bluffs. These areas are dominated by somewhat poorly-drained to very poorly-drained soils that have a medium textured soils; underlain by outwash sand or stratified loamy and sandy deposits. These nearly level to sloping soils occupy glaciated lake basins and floodplains. These soils are used mainly for cultivated crops, pasture and wooded areas. While these soils have good potential for cultivated crops, flooding and excess wetness are the main limitations for cultivated crops. Flooding and wetness are severe limitations for traditional septic removal and make the potential for residential development poor.

Environmentally Sensative Areas

Map # 6, *Environmentally Sensitive Areas*, shows slopes over 12%, steep slopes over 20%, Floodplains, Wetlands, Hydric Soils, and Endangered Species. Ridges and Hilltops dominate portions of the landscape. Some specific features are noted below.

Dinasour Bluff

Dinasour Bluff is a large, stand-alone geological feature located in the west-central part of Sumpter Township. This unique feature is an eroded remnant of an ancient upheaval formed of quartzite. The edges of this remnant appear to have been eroded away by the ancient seas of the area and the melt waters of glaciers. It is a large feature measuring approximately 1.3 miles east to west and .5 miles north to south. It rises about 100 feet above the surrounding farmland. Dinasour Bluff is completely held in private ownership at present protected only by the stewardship of its owners.

The Baraboo Bluffs, also known as The Baraboo Hills and The Baraboo Range

The Baraboo Bluffs are a regionally and nationally significant natural resource containing the largest track of oak-maple forest in the upper Midwest. Portions of this area, including Baxter's Hollow Nature Preserve, Devils Lake State Park and Pine Hollow, lie in the northern section of the Township. The Range is a remnant of an ancient mountain range. The diverse topography of the Bluff's creates a variety of ecological habitats and great scenic beauty. Twenty-eight different types of forest, wetland and prairie have been identified in the Bluffs, providing habitat for 23 federal or state listed threatened or endangered species.

In recognition of its outstanding geological and ecological significance, 50,700 acres of the "South Range" were designated as the **Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark (BRNNL)** by the Secretary of the Interior in 1980, and one of the Earth's "Last Great Places" by the Nature Conservancy in 1994. Sauk County adopted The *Baraboo Range Protection Program (BRPP)* Plan in 1999. Under the Protection Plan, the county purchases conservation easements from willing sellers to protect the forest from development. Funding to purchase the easements is the result of a settlement relating to the expansion of US Hwy 12 from Middleton to Lake Delton. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, and the Baraboo