**Week 7- Goal 3- Increase the Amount and Quality of Information Available Concerning Land and Water in Forest County**

**Conservation Corner**

***Conservation Corner is a weekly article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Al Murray, Land&Water Resources Technician at 715-478-3893 or by e-mail at*** ***lcc@co.forest.wi.us******.***

**Forest County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP) Goal 3**: Increase the Amount and Quality of Information Available Concerning Land and Water in Forest County

A large amount of land, water and resource data is available from many different sources. Most people commonly recognize sources such as Google maps and MapQuest from their normal uses. These types of maps are from sources called Geographic Information Systems or GIS. At the county level there is independent GIS data maintained by the County departments. Public mapping with various information is currently available on the County website or by going directly to <http://forestcowi.wgxtreme.com/> which gives the user basic land information often found at the Treasurer’s office. This is a small set of the information that is currently available, much more is available for natural resources and conservation.

Use of current GIS systems for accurate mapping of resources and resource concerns is critical for making informed decisions regarding land practices and use. This makes increasing the amount and quality of information a goal of the LWRMP. One of the items under this goal is to procure LIDAR for use in Forest County.

What is Lidar? Lidar (light detection and ranging) is an optical remote-sensing technique that uses laser light to densely sample the surface of the earth, producing highly accurate x,y,z measurements. Lidar, primarily used in airborne laser mapping applications, is emerging as a cost effective alternative to traditional surveying techniques. Basically, lasers are utilizing from an airplane flight in combination with known elevations to give accurate mapping of elevations across large areas. Forest County has partnered with other entities to complete this flight and the data has been collected. When the data is available, the County will be able to utilize GIS mapping to give accurate mapping of water levels, wetlands , topography, buildings and improvements to a standard of 1 foot accuracy.

Utilizing Lidar will allow for use of GIS topography mapping in land use and zoning permits, improved mapping during permitting for review of the land use department and improved mapping of water resources including high-water marks and flood zones. This will improve efficiency within the LCC department.

Additional items under this goal is to create parcel based GIS layers for use in ordinance enforcement and obtaining additional GIS data from local landowners and partners. Accurate GIS will be a great benefit to all County departments.

Look for future installments to explain additional goals and objectives of the LWRMP. To view the **Forest County Land and Water Resource Management Plan** please go to [www.co.forest.wi.gov](http://www.co.forest.wi.gov), click the departments tab, then click “Land Conservation”, a link to the LWRMP is on our website.