**Week 16- Land and Water Conservation Board**

**Conservation Corner**

***Conservation Corner is a regular article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Al Murray, Land&Water Resources Technician at 715-478-1387 or by e-mail at*** ***lcc@co.forest.wi.us******.***

As I write the article this week, I am preparing updates from Forest County on accomplishments that have been made this year on work toward meeting the goals of the Forest County Land and Water Plan. These updates will be presented at a meeting with the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB) at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) in Madison.

The LWCB connects local and state governments on conservation and farmland preservation issues. The board:

* Reviews county land and water plans and makes recommendations
* Recommends how the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection should allocate conservation funds to counties
* Approves releases from farmland preservation agreements (if signed before July 1, 2009)
* Provides a forum to discuss emerging soil and water conservation issues

The LWCB has 11 members: 3 each from county land conservation committees and state agency leaders, one Governor-appointed member serving a two-year term, and 4 Governor-appointed members representing urban, rural, river management and natural resource preservation interests.

The LWCB review of plans, determines the amount of cost share funding that comes to Forest County. The board also reviews and approves DATCP staffing grant funding which fully funds the County Conservationist position as well as 70% of an additional position and 10% of a third position.

The LWCB reviewed and approve the Forest County Land & Water Plan in October of 2017, however at the board meeting in December 2017 the board requested that Forest County present updates on its work toward the plan goals in the 1st and 3rd year of the plan in addition to the regular 5 year review of the 10 year plan.

The presentation to LWCB will include updates on department splitting which addresses some of the board’s initial concerns with staffing working too much on zoning. The update will also include accomplishments of the department including assisting Pine Lake with potential dredging projects, research on the effects of historic wildfires on Forest County lakes and streams, maintaining activity with the Forest County Association of Lakes, improvements in the use of GIS and compilation of GIS data, reviews and drafting updates on the County Comprehensive Plan to promote well planned development, completion of over 120 site visits of shore land properties, and proposals for 7 cost share potential projects.

I hope all is well with the readers and I encourage all to get out and enjoy our fall colors. Scenic drive maps from many Towns are available on the County website under the Visit the Forest of Wisconsin tab.