

Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(e), the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of a community's comprehensive plan is to be:

"A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and non-metallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s.295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources, and other natural resources".

For the purposes of this *Plan*, the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources element has been divided into three separate Chapters, each with their own goals, objectives and policies. The Chapters are as follows:

- Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Each Chapter also has a section that addresses issues and opportunities for that specific Chapter, however, tools for implementation that might apply to all three Chapters have been described only at the end of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources to avoid duplication, as referenced in 4.4. of this Chapter.

4.1. Overview

Identification and preservation of historic, archeologically or architecturally important sites helps to foster a feeling of pride and identity in a community. Similarly, the ability to participate in culturally diverse activities and events helps to give Rock County residents a feeling of place within their community. Rock County has many quality opportunities and places for the pleasure and enrichment of its residents. Additionally, there is strong awareness of the importance of historic and cultural preservation that is helping to assure the continued availability of significant buildings and sites of nationwide. At the same, however, a growing population and favorable economic factors create incentives to replace historic buildings instead of restoring them and the tendency to deemphasize the importance of preserving other culturally significant sites in favor of development. Identifying and designating sites is an important step in the preservation of Rock County's rich history and culture.

Responses from a Countywide survey done in Spring 2006, as well as comments by vision workshop participants (Fall 2005) indicated that citizens of Rock County are supportive of

preservation of cultural and historic sites. Although there may be widely differing opinions about how protection of these attributes can best be accomplished, this Chapter will present the best information available from a variety of professional sources and experiences and from Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency, in the form of research and maps, that lead to the formation of the following strategies, policies and recommendations.

4.2. Existing Plans, Policies, and Inventories

National Register of Historic Places

Text from the National Park Service website states, "The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation." Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historic and archeological resources. It goes on to say, "National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, Federal agencies, and others identify important historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and consideration in planning and development decisions."

Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings - 1976

The Rock County Historical Society in conjunction with the Rock County Planning Department did a comprehensive study of Rock County historic sites and buildings dated May 15th, 1976. Nancy Belle S. Douglas and Richard P. Hartung created the text. To date, this is the most complete study of historic sites and building available. A copy of this historical study may be viewed at the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency, or at the City of Janesville Hedberg Public Library. Additional information regarding Rock County history and historic sites, buildings, and memorabilia can be obtained from the Rock County Historical Society located in the City of Janesville.

Architecture and Historic Inventory (AHI) Sites

The Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) is a collection of information and photographs documenting the architecture and history of historic structures, sites, objects, and districts throughout Wisconsin including Rock County (see Map 4.1). This inventory is housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society in the City of Madison and is maintained by the Society's Division of Historic Preservation.

Other historic settlement and archeological sites are located throughout the County and have been identified and mapped as key sites by the Wisconsin Historical Society. These datasets represent settlements and locations of archaeological sites as listed in the Archeological Site

Inventory (ASI) of the Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society. These important settlements and archeological sites help to document the settlement locations and patterns of early Rock County.

Archeological Site Inventory (ASI)

Rock County contains several ancient burial sites and archeological features of high historical significance as inventoried by the Wisconsin Historical Society in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory (ASI). The Beloit College area has 23 prime examples of Native American conical, linear, and animal shaped effigy mounds built between 400 and 1100 A.D. Although not all effigy mounds contain skeletal remains, they are of great historical importance in the study of Native American cultural anthropology. Because early civilizations used water systems as transportation corridors, most archeological sites are located adjacent to or with close proximity to water. Many of Rock County’s major archeological sites are located in areas close to the Rock River, Yahara River, Turtle Creek, and Lake Koshkonong (see Map 4.1).

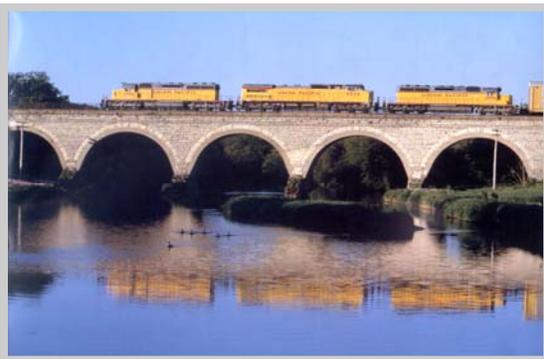
4.3. Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory

Architectural and Historic Sites



Tallman House, City of Janesville

Rock County is home to many historic sites and buildings that add charm and historic interest to the area. Certainly, all but the most infrequent visitor to Rock County is aware of the Tallman house in the City of Janesville, the Five Arch Bridge located in the Town of Turtle or historic Beckman Mill in the Town of Newark. These locations along with others, (see Figure 4.1) offer a step back in time and a cultural learning experience.



Five Arch Bridge, Towns of Turtle and Tiffany



Beckman Mill, Town of Newark

- Milton House

In 1998 the Milton House was designated a National Historic Landmark and is, to date, the only National Historic Landmark in Rock County. It is the only Underground Railroad National Historic Landmark in all of Wisconsin and as such, represents an important aspect of Rock County history. For more information on the Milton House visit www.miltonhouse.org.

**Figure 4.1:
Historic Sites and Attractions: Rock County**

Site or Attraction	Location	Contact
1800's Log Cabin and Museum	205 W. Lawton Street, Edgerton	608-884-4408
The Armory	10 S. High St., Janesville	866-995-7400
Beckman Mill	11600 S. County Road H, Beloit	www.beckmanmill.org
Beloit College	700 College St., Beloit	608-363-2000
Beloit Historical Society/ Lincoln Center	845 Hackett St., Beloit	608-365-7835
Beloit Visitors Center	1003 Pleasant St., Beloit	800-4-Beloit
Cooksville Historical Sites	State Highway Hwy 59 and 138, Cooksville	608-873-3115
Evansville Historic District	Evansville	608-882-2260
Fisher Schoolhouse	State Highway 213 and Luther Valley Rd.	608-879-9990
Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead	2149 St. Lawrence Ave., Beloit	608-365-7835
Lincoln Tallman House	440 N. Jackson St., Janesville	608-756-4509
Rock County Historical Society	N. Jackson St., Janesville	800-577-1859
Milton Historical Society	P.O. Box 245, Milton	608-868-7772
Milton College Historic District	513 College St., Milton	608-868-3651
Milton House Museum Historic Site	State Highways 26 and 59, Milton	608-868-7772
Helen Jefferies Wood Museum Center	426 N. Jackson St., Janesville	608-756-4509
Logan Museum of Anthropology	Memorial Hall, Beloit College, Beloit	608-363-2110
Luther Valley Historical Society	Depot and W. Centre St., Footville	608-876-6776
Medal of Honor Walkway	Veteran's Plaza at Traxler Park, Janesville	608-755-3030
Sterling North Home and Museum	409 W. Rollin St., Edgerton	608-884-3870
Tiffany Five Arch Bridge	Smith Rd., Shopiere	608-362-0655
City of Janesville Historic Commission	City of Janesville	608-755-3085
City of Beloit Historic Preservation	City of Beloit	608-364-6711

Cemeteries

Signs of Rock County's historic and cultural heritage can be found in several cemeteries located throughout the County (see Map 4.1). Many of the County's forefathers, prominent citizens, and "everyday important people" are buried within the cemeteries of Rock County. An education in history awaits anyone who has the interest to explore these sites. A tour of any Rock County cemetery will produce a historical connection to surnames present in our local road names, historical sites, businesses, and architecture. An often-overlooked aspect of cemeteries, other than the historical connection, is the cultural value of the stone artwork, design, and engraving.

Historical Markers

Rock County is currently home to 18 State of Wisconsin Historical Markers. The markers are located at key historical sites and buildings throughout the County. Private individuals as well as cities, towns, and villages may purchase historical markers. The marker program is designed to document a significant historical event, person, or place. The upkeep of the marker is the responsibility of the purchaser. There are firms located in the State that will refurbish deteriorated or damage markers for a fee. Although these State historical markers do not offer a complete history of the area, they do provide historical insight as to major activities and events important to communities and local areas (see Map 4.1 and Figure 4.2).

Rustic Roads

The 1973 State Legislature created the Rustic Roads Systems in Wisconsin in an effort to aid citizens and local units of government to preserve Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads. These roads are used for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel in unhurried, quiet and leisurely enjoyment. There are currently two designated rustic roads in Rock County. They are Serns Road, which runs from the City of Milton north to County Highway N, and Riley Road, which runs from U.S. Highway 14 north to the County line.

A rustic road not only serves as an aesthetic feature for a community or region, they can actually attract economic development due to increased interest from homebuyers, tourists, and recreationalists. A well maintained, properly signed, and promoted rustic road system is a feature that adds value to a city, town, village, or county.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a trail located entirely in Wisconsin. It is projected to be over 1,000 miles long when completed. The trail is supported by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, which includes 23 local chapters throughout Wisconsin. The trail system offers a varied and scenic hiking experience while attempting to follow, or stay adjacent to, the glacial geology of the Green Bay and Lake Michigan lobes of the Wisconsin glaciation that occurred approximately 10,000 years ago.

**Figure 4.2:
State of Wisconsin Historical Markers: Rock County**

Title	Location	Date	Community
First State Fair	Rock County Courthouse Area on S. Atwood Ave.	1954	City of Janesville
Jefferson Prairie Settlement	State Highway 140, 4 miles south of Village of Clinton, in the road triangle	N/A	Town of Clinton
Medal of Honor	Rest area on Interstate 90/39 (westbound), south of City of Beloit at Stateline	1990	Town of Turtle
Blackhawk at Turtle Village	Rock River Heritage Walkway just north of junction of Public and State Streets	1998	City of Beloit
Home of Governor Harvey	Southwest corner of the intersection of County Highway S and J, Shopiere	1953	Town of Turtle
Route of Abraham Lincoln	U.S. Highway 51 across from Blackhawk Technical College (rear entrance)	1960	Town of Rock
Wisconsin's First Aviation	Milwaukee Rd. and Lee Lane, Morgan School	1964	Town of Turtle
Burr Robbins Circus	Next to the Spring Brook Bike Trail, Dawson Field, north of the intersection of Delavan Dr. and Beloit Ave.	2000	Town of Rock
The Black Hawk War	Next to the Spring Brook Bike Trail, Blackhawk Golf Course, Palmer Dr. (west of the Clubhouse)	2001	Town of Harmony
Beckman Mill	Located next to the main driveway to the Beckman Mill, County Highway H	1997	Town of Newark
Wisconsin's Tobacco Land	Located on U.S. Highway 51 (northbound, just north of Rock River Bridge), one half mile south of City of Edgerton	1961	Town of Fulton
Village of Cooksville	North of State Highway 59 on Church St. at Cooksville Community Center	1996	Town of Porter
Milton House	In front of Milton House Museum 18 S. Janesville St. (State Highway 26)	1961	City of Milton
Rock River Industry	Front of the rest area on Interstate 90/39 (eastbound), 4 miles north of City of Janesville	1983	Town of Milton
Janesville Tank Company	In front of the Armory, 10 S. High St.	1990	City of Janesville
Black Hawk War	Northwest corner of the Interstate 90/39 rest area, south of City of Beloit	1968	City of Turtle
Beloit College	Front wall of the Middle College building on Beloit College campus	1967	City of Beloit
Storr's Lake	South wall of the stable at the Milton House Museum	1976	City of Milton

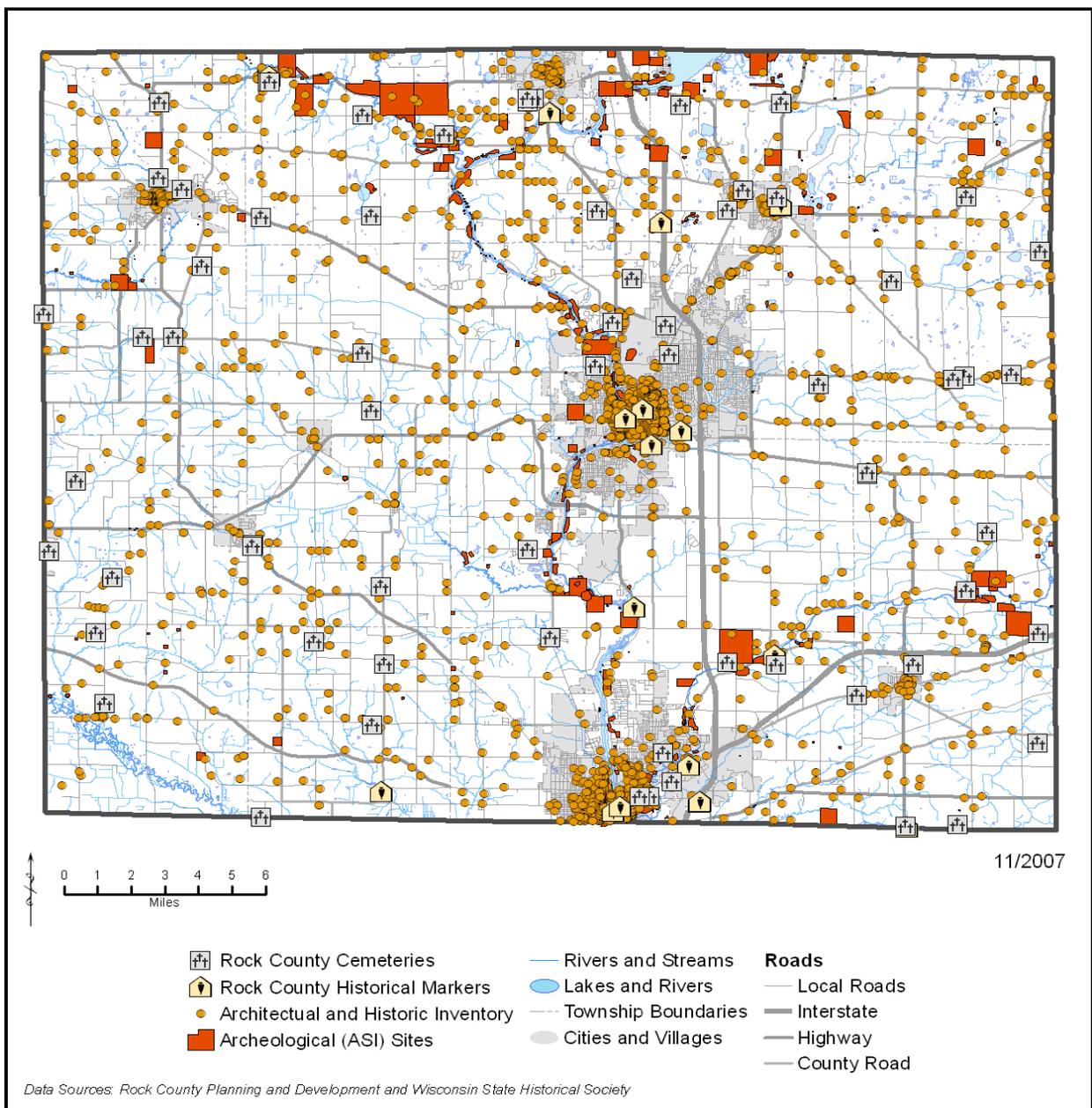
As of 2009, there is a short segment of the trail that begins at Storrs Lake Recreation Area and continues along Vincent Street on the City of Milton’s west side. In June 2007 the City of Janesville approved a request to construct a one-mile hiking trail from the north end of Riverside Park to N. Washington Street. This trail hooks the Devil’s Staircase Hiking Trail into the Ice Age Trail system. Additionally, the Ice Age Trail has physical connections to both the Kiwanis Trail and the Spring Brooke Trail systems.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail, in association with the National Parks Service, has begun a trail corridor scoping study in Rock County in hopes to complete a Rock County trail segment as

part of the approximately 1,000 mile Wisconsin segment of the Ice Age Scenic Trail. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail and National Parks Service has selected a group of area environmental and recreation professionals to participate on two committees (Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee) in the selection and assessment of potential future trail corridors.

The future segment will connect Rock County with neighboring county trail systems. The lands needed to complete this system will come from a combination of existing public land, land grants or gifts, and landowner agreements.

**Map 4.1:
Cemeteries, Historical Markers, and
Architectural, Historical, and Archeological Sites**



Cultural Sites, Organizations and Activities

Rock County has a wide array of cultural activities, events, and performances that offer entertainment as well as an opportunity for cultural awareness to its citizens and visitors. From theatre to musicals the Rock County area is home to many facilities and groups dedicated to the performing arts and entertainment (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).



*Janesville Performing Arts Center,
City of Janesville*



Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre, Beloit College

**Figure 4.3:
Cultural Sites, Organizations, Activities, and Events: Rock County**

Cultural Sites, Organizations, Activities and Events	Location
American Industrial Art Gallery	655 3 rd St. Suite 302, City of Beloit
The Angel Museum	656 Pleasant St., City of Beloit
Beloit Fine Arts Incubator	620 Grand Ave., City of Beloit
Beloit Snappers Baseball	Pohlman Field, Telfer Park, City of Beloit
Janesville Art League	108 S. Jackson St., City of Janesville
Poetry Gardens, Wright Museum of Art	700 College St., City of Beloit
Rock Aqua Jays Water Ski Show	Traxler Park, City of Janesville
Rotary Gardens	1455 Palmer Dr., City of Janesville
Welty Environmental Center	8606 County Highway H, City of Beloit
Rock County Thresheree	Thresherman’s Park, U.S. Highway 51, Town of Fulton
The Merrill Community Center	1428 Wisconsin Ave., City of Beloit
El Centro Hispanic Community	1982 Cranston Rd., City of Beloit
The Milton House	State Highway 26, City of Milton

**Figure 4.4:
Music and Theatre Venues: Rock County**

Venue	Location	Contact
The Armory	City of Janesville	
Beloit Civic Center	City of Beloit	www.inwave.com/theater/bct
Beloit College International Performing Arts Series	Beloit College, City of Beloit	www.beloit.edu
Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra	Cities of Beloit and Janesville	www.beloit.edu/~bjso
Edgerton Performing Arts Center	City of Edgerton	www.edgerton.k12.wi.us/epachomepage.htm
Janesville Presents	City of Janesville	www.janesvillepresents.org
Janesville Little Theatre	City of Janesville	www.inwave.com/theater/jlt/
Janesville Performing Arts Center	City of Janesville	www.janesvillepac.org
Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre	Beloit College, City of Beloit	www.beloit.edu
New Court Theatre	City of Beloit	www.newcourtbeloit.com
Kirk Denmark Theatre	University of Wisconsin - Rock County, City of Janesville	www.rock.uwc.edu
Rock County 4H Fair	Rock County Fairgrounds, City of Janesville	www.rockcounty4hfair.com
Riverfest	Riverfront, City of Beloit	www.beloitriverfest.com

Source: Rock County Tourism Council

The preceding listings are by no means a complete inventory of all the available sites, organizations, activities, or events that represent the cultural resources of Rock County. For more information contact the Rock County Tourism Council at 608-757-5587 or go to www.rockcounty.org and click on the Tourism tab or contact Visit Beloit, 1003 Pleasant St., Beloit, Wisconsin 53511 or Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at www.janesvillecvb.com.

Cultural Opportunities

With the populations and diversity of ethnic groups increasing in Rock County, cultural organizations, activities, and related facilities will certainly grow and expand. To date, as compared to just a few years ago, there has been an increasing presence of art exhibits, festivals, publications, and community activities associated with many minority ethnic groups. For example, in the African-American community Juneteenth (June 19th) has been an important nationally recognized celebration. The local celebration of Juneteenth has been historically held in Beloit. For more information on this event see www.juneteenth.com/history.

Two important organizations in the Hispanic community are El Centro Hispanic Community

located in the City of Beloit and the YWCA. El Centro sponsors youth activities, tutoring and mentoring, and outreach events such as youth leadership summits and keynote speakers. One of El Centro's missions is to be a non-partisan central location for information and referrals within the Stateline area regarding Hispanic services and opportunities. In addition, the Janesville YWCA Hispanic outreach program sponsors Hispanic Heritage Month (September-October) as well as various community support services and events including the Hispanic celebration of Cinco de Mayo (5th of May). The Cinco de Mayo celebration takes place annually at various locations in the Cities of Janesville, Beloit, and around Rock County. All of the above mentioned events and services are designed to educate, inform, and enlighten the Hispanic sector of Rock County.

Rock County is home to many other cultural and ethnic publications, organizations and events that contribute to the diversity of area. *The Chronicle* is an African-American weekly newspaper established in 1981 and based in the City of Beloit that has a weekly publication of 6,000. Gospel in the Park is a musical celebration of gospel music that is quickly becoming a mainstay event in the City of Beloit. The Merrill Center, a Stateline area United Way Agency, contributes to youth mentoring through programs such as Golfing with the Boys as well as family support services and senior programs. These are all examples of important cultural components of Rock County.

4.4. Historic and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities

This section states the County's historic and cultural resources issues and opportunities.

- **Identification of Historic Sites and People:** As with agricultural and natural resources, historic and cultural resources are often threatened resources that require protective measures to remain intact. The State and National Register of Historic Places (Registries) are excellent tools for preserving historic buildings and archeological sites once sites have been identified and have been accepted into the programs. A bigger issue for Rock County, however, is the continual identification and updating of potential historic and cultural sites that may be eligible for placement in the Registries. Although the State Historical Society and Rock County have both done studies to identify historic sites, they quickly become obsolete as structures are removed and replaced.

Other groups and organizations in Rock County have also recognized important historical events and leaders in the community that are not named here, such as the Lavinia Goodell marker erected at the Rock County Courthouse by the Rock County Women's History Committee. The continued identification of such people and sites throughout Rock County is recommended and encouraged.

The Logan Museum of Anthropology is an additional resource, located at Beloit College that can offer additional information on Native American archeological sites located throughout Rock County.

- **Historic Barns and Landscapes:** Another opportunity for Rock County lies in the specific recognition of barns and landscapes as items of historical and cultural interest. Some of these structures and landscapes may be protected through farmland preservation. There are various programs and incentives available for barn restoration in Wisconsin. Additional information is available from the Wisconsin Historical Society www.wisconsinhistory.org on available programs.
- **Tax Benefits for Archeological Site Preservation:** State of Wisconsin Statute 70.11 (13.m.) provides a property tax exemption for owners of land containing an archeological site that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places. The intent of the legislation is to provide an incentive for landowners to report and protect significant archaeological sites located on their lands. To obtain the tax exemption, the landowner must agree to place a permanent protective covenant on the site thereby helping the State of Wisconsin preserve its archaeological heritage and making the landowner a steward of Wisconsin's past. A protective covenant does not discourage all uses of the site, but it encourages land use planning to avoid disturbing the site area. The covenant contains a legal description of the area that is to be exempted from property taxes and defines landowner and Wisconsin Historical Society obligations in the protection of that area. Continued identification and mapping of these sites is critical to their preservation.
- **Tax Credit for Historic Homeowners:** The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation administers a program of 25% State income tax credits for repair and rehabilitation of historic homes in Wisconsin that are listed on a State or National Register and meet eligible work/improvement requirements (see the Wisconsin Historical Society website for more information).
- **Tax Credit for Income-Producing Historic Properties:** Owners of historic income-producing properties in Wisconsin may be eligible for two income tax credits that can help to pay for the building's rehabilitation. Two programs that apply to these properties are the Federal Historic Preservation Credit and the Wisconsin Supplemental Historic Preservation Credit (see the Wisconsin Historical Society website for more information).
- **Other Pertinent Issues, Opportunities and Tools:** Issues, opportunities and tools for historic resource protection are discussed in 2.4. of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources of this *Plan*. Because historic resources are in need of similar types of conscientious preservation efforts, many of the subjects listed in that Chapter are relevant to historic and cultural resource protection as well as to agricultural preservation.

4.5. Historic and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies

This section states the County's historic and cultural resources goal, objectives, and policies.

Historic and Cultural Resources Goal

- 4.1. Preserve and protect historical and cultural resources within Rock County that are identified in the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* and other plans and Inventories.

Historic and Cultural Resources Objectives and Policies

- 4.1.1. Encourage and support efforts to identify and document historic sites and buildings, burial and archeological sites and cemeteries within Rock County.
 - 4.1.1.a. Rock County shall, where resources allow, update the *Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings - 1976* inventory to reflect the current status of sites already appearing in the inventory and to add additional sites.
 - 4.1.1.b. Rock County shall, where resources allow, collect data and provide information regarding the type and location of burial and archeological sites and activities within Rock County and serve as a public clearing house for such data and information.
 - 4.1.1.c. Rock County shall, if appropriate, assist Towns with the identification and designation of historic, burial and archeological sites.
 - 4.1.1.d. Rock County shall identify historic, burial and archeological sites that are likely to be impacted by future development.
 - 4.1.1.e. Rock County shall encourage developers to incorporate and preserve historic, burial and archeological sites within the designs and scope of their projects.
 - 4.1.1.f. Rock County shall enforce the State of Wisconsin Statutes regulating Burial Sites Preservation (see State of Wisconsin Statute 157.70).
 - 4.1.1.g. Rock County shall encourage and support Towns in an effort to utilize service groups such as church youth groups, boys and girls clubs, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, or any other service/youth group to participate in the maintenance and/or restoration of cemeteries and burial sites within Rock County.

- 4.1.1.h. Rock County shall support and encourage the establishment of historic preservation committees and/or historic preservation zoning overlay districts at the Town level (see State of Wisconsin Statutes 59.69 and 60.64).
- 4.1.2. Consider developing Rock County policies to aid in the identification and preservation of historic and cultural resources.
- 4.1.2.a. Rock County shall consider amending the Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) to implement:
- Procedures and guidelines for the development of design proposals that alleviate the disruption and/or degradation of archeological and historical sites within development areas
 - Identification of historic buildings and sites, cemeteries, archeological and other burial sites on or near proposed development sites
 - Development designs that minimize the disruption and degradation of historic and cultural sites
- 4.1.3. Identify, attract, and support historical and cultural resources for the citizens of Rock County.
- 4.1.3.a. Rock County shall encourage and assist, where possible, in the identification and designation of rustic roads in Rock County.
- 4.1.3.b. Rock County shall encourage and assist, where possible, in the identification of appropriate locations for historical markers identifying important historical people, places, and events throughout Rock County.
- 4.1.3.c. Rock County shall support, encourage, and assist all local units of government in the development of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail as a historically significant feature in Rock County.
- 4.1.3.d. Rock County shall provide or direct interested parties to educational materials on available cultural resources and events within Rock County.
- 4.1.3.e. Rock County shall promote the efficient use of existing facilities to aid in the attraction and presentation of cultural events and activities.
- 4.1.3.f. Rock County shall support, where appropriate, the creation of new cultural or ethnic opportunities within Rock County.
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