

case statement

The Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County

When you think about what makes Washington County unique and enjoyable, our beautiful landscape and its natural features come immediately to mind. Holy Hill, the Milwaukee River, the Kettle Moraine, the lush green of dairy farms, our crystalline lakes. These special places serve us in so many ways. They are our heritage. They are a respite, an inspiration, a connection between past and future.



What would Washington County be like if we didn't have these places? What if they were simply removed from the landscape, or their beauty and uniqueness were compromised in some way? Do we want to tell our children, "That used to be a beautiful place"? Our farmland, forests and marshes help define our county. If they are lost, we lose part of who we are. This community loses part of its identity.

You don't need to know the statistics to understand how fast Washington County is growing. Just drive around the county. Growth is good: jobs, houses, roads, businesses, clinics and shopping centers are aspects of our quality of life and by-products of the growth we are experiencing here. But unless we make a strong and clear case for balancing new development with conserving the farmland and natural areas of our community, they will be lost. We lose hundreds of acres of farmland to development every year, and too many of our natural areas have been compromised by or even lost to development.

It's not enough to wish that our farmland and natural areas be protected. We have to act to save the places we love, and we will have to invest resources in protecting these lands. A group of Washington County citizens, businesses, organizations and elected officials are ready to act, and ready to engage the people of Washington County about why, and how, we should save our farmland and natural areas.

The Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County envisions the following for our county:

- That our most important threatened natural areas are protected forever, and that they continue to provide important economic, social and ecological functions: controlling floodwater, recharging underground water supplies, offering wildlife habitat, and providing recreation and scenic beauty.
- That family farms remain part of our economic, cultural and ecological landscape, and that our farmland owners have an option to preserve their land if they want to.
- That the County has adequate resources to protect important natural areas and valuable farmland, through purchasing land or conservation easements from willing sellers.
- That the citizens of Washington County have the chance to invest in the future of their community's farmland and natural areas by creating a "farmland and natural areas conservation fund" for the county.

The Partnership invites any person or organization – churches, civic groups, hunters and anglers, businesses, realtors, bird-watchers, farmers, schools, urban and rural, young and old – to join us in this effort to protect and preserve the land that matters to us.

We want you to be able to say, on some future day near that special place you love, "This is here because we made the commitment to preserve it."

saving SPACES...protecting PLACES



A partnership of individuals, businesses and organizations working to protect farmland and natural areas in Washington County