

Chapter Three: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

This chapter of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* satisfies the agricultural, natural and cultural resources elements described in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This chapter does not directly address the use of natural resources for recreational purposes (instead see Chapter Six).

A. Agricultural Resource Inventory

Farming is still a way of life for many Town residents and an essential part of our region and nation. The agricultural landscape, also defines much of Dekorra's rural character. The land is punctuated by seasonal changes in crop cover, colors and textures of fields, and architecturally significant farm buildings.

1. Character of Farming

Farmers in Dekorra produce a variety of agricultural commodities including dairy, alfalfa, corn and soybeans, as well as vegetables and fruits for the local market. The average farm size in Dekorra was approximately 201 acres in 1997, up from 187 acres in 1990. The average farm size for the entire County was 208 acres in 1997 and 182 acres in 1990.

Most of the farms in the Town remain family-owned. The total number of active farms in Dekorra increased during most of the 1990s. According to the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service (WASS), the estimated number of full time farm operations in the Town grew from 110 in 1990 to 122 in 1997. (WASS defines an active farm as a place that sells at least \$1,000 worth of agricultural products in a given year). These numbers suggest that farming remains viable in the Town. Still, according to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, the number of dairy farms in the Town decreased, from 69 active farms in 1989 to 59 farms in 1997. This decline is at least partially attributed to the drop in milk prices during the 1990s and the consolidation of dairy herds.

The State Farmland Preservation Program provides income tax credits to property owners who agree to keep their land in agricultural use. As of the mid-1990s, 89% of the Town's farmland was enrolled in this program.

2. Location of Farmland

According to WISCLAND data developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), approximately 51% of the land in Dekorra was used for agricultural purposes in the early 1990's. The "Farmland" land use category included row crops, hayfields, pastures, grasslands, idle farmland, and Conservation Reserve Program land. As shown in Map 5, agricultural land still covers the majority of Dekorra. Nearly all of this land was designated in the "Agriculture/Woodlands Plan District" in the 1997 Town Land Use Plan and is zoned Agricultural.



3. Assessment of Farmland Viability

The suitability of land for crop production is one important predictor of its future viability for continued farming and its level of appropriateness for non-farm development.

The USDA-NRCS Land Evaluation System groups soil suitability for agriculture based on three factors: prime farmland soils, soil productivity for corn, and land capability class. Soils are grouped by suitability from Group I to Group VIII. Group I soils have few limitations that restrict their use for agriculture. Group II soils have moderate limitations that may reduce the choice of crops, require special conservation practices, or both.

Soil suitability for agriculture is presented on Map 3. Much of Dekorra's land is not as well-suited for crop production as land in neighboring towns, and may be better suited to animal farming and other open space uses. Approximately 15% of all soils in Dekorra are in Group II and are concentrated in the northeastern part of the Town along Highway 51. There is only a very small amount of Group I soils in the Town.

Of course, the viability of land for continued farming is affected by other factors aside from soil suitability. These include size and shape of cropland, farm product market prices, individual commitments to farming (financial and emotional), opportunities for animal farming, conflicts with nearby non-farm uses, proximity to urban areas (sewer and water), and proximity to highways. Each of these factors was considered in making land use recommendations included in Chapter Four of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

B. Agricultural Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Preserve productive farmland and farming as an occupation for future generations.

2. Objectives

- a. Preserve productive farmland for continued agricultural use.
- b. In planned agricultural areas, limit the amount of non-farm uses, and guide the location of allowable homes on individual sites.
- c. Direct new homes to smaller lots, to locations where housing is already located, and in clusters where appropriate.
- d. Support appropriate opportunities for farmers to obtain non-farm income.

3. Policies and Programs

- a. Designate **most of the Town as a planned Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area**, with most of those lands appropriate for agricultural zoning.
- b. **Limit the number of homes in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area** by following a maximum residential density policy, described in more detail in Chapter Four.
- c. **Guide the placement of homes**, driveways, and other uses in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area to **less productive soils** and the edges of agricultural fields, as described in more detail in Chapter Four.

- d. Promote the **clustering or grouping of homesites** in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area consistent with the residential density policy, and promote the use of design guidelines to direct homes away from the best soils and protect rural character.
- e. Promote the **clustering of smaller lots** in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area as mapped on Map 6 (e.g., average lot size of 3 acres), rather than larger homesites (e.g., 35+ acres), in order to preserve open land and agricultural uses. Refer to the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Chapter Four for detailed clustering standards in these planned land use areas.
- f. Allow **home occupations and farm family businesses** on farm parcels to supplement farming income.
- g. Support farmland tax credits, use value assessments, reform in federal farm laws, and other programs that **encourage the continued use of land for farming**.

Dekorra Comprehensive Plan

Map 3 Dekorra Soil Suitability for Agriculture

 Municipal Boundaries
 Roads

 Group I Agricultural Soils*
 Group II Agricultural Soils*
 Group III Agricultural Soils*

Note: This map is for general informational use only, and is not to be used to obtain detailed siting information.

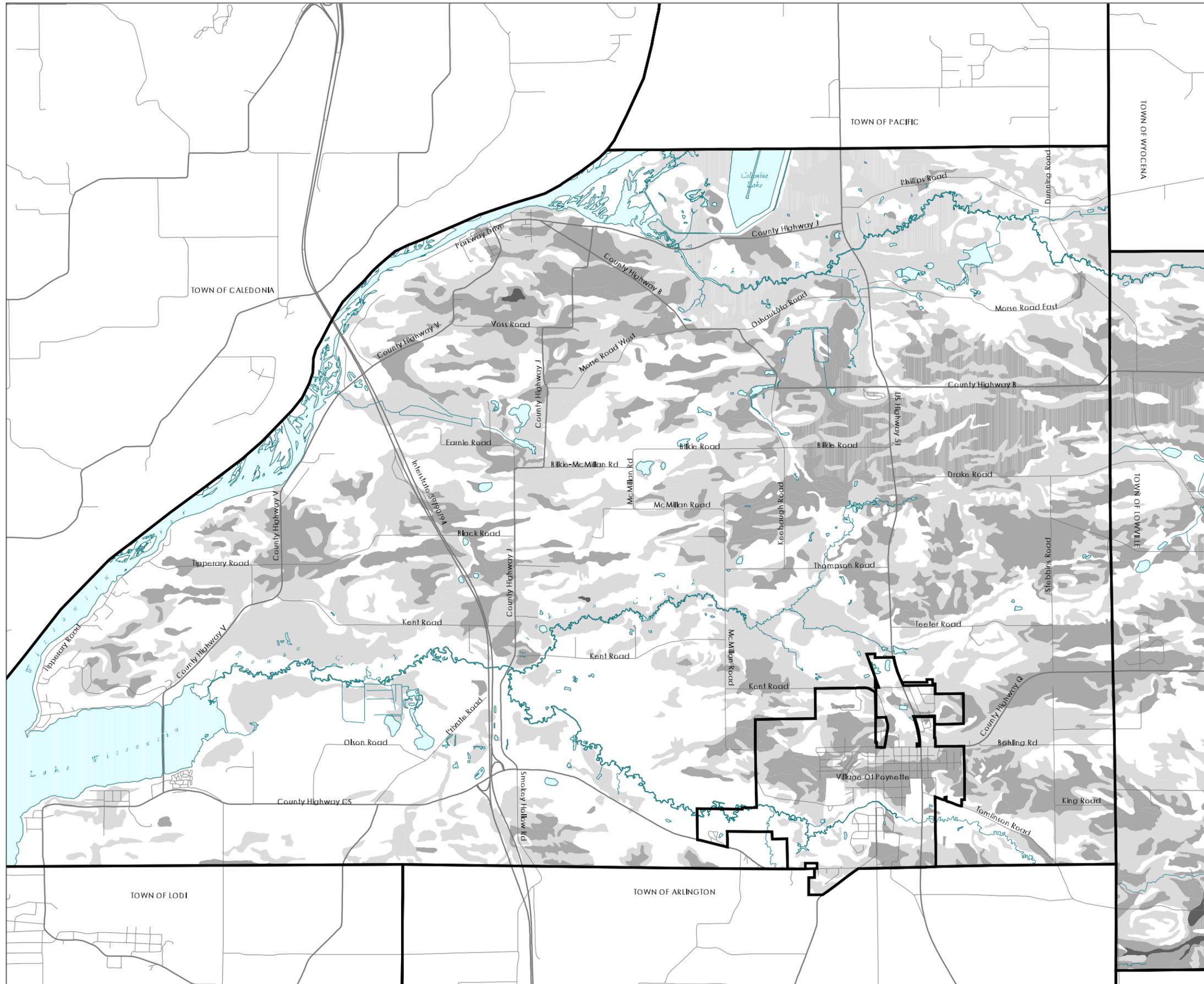
*Group I, II, & III soils derived from the USDA-NRCS Land Evaluation System. The system uses three factors to determine a numeric rating from Group I to VIII: prime farmland, soil productivity for corn & alfalfa, & land capability class. Group I soils have the highest crop yield & few limitations that restrict their use for agriculture. Group II soils have moderate limitations that may reduce the choice of crops, require special conservation practices, or both. Refer to NRCS documentation for further explanation.

4250 0 4250 Feet



Adopted May 10, 2005
 Sources: Columbia County LTO, NRCS,
 & Wisconsin DNR

 Vandewalle & Associates
 Madison, Wisconsin
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C. Inventory of Other Natural Resources

Understanding Dekorra's natural features suggests possible locational advantages for particular land uses. It is also essential to understand the location of environmentally sensitive areas where development is not appropriate. This will prevent severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult or costly to correct in the future. Maintenance of these natural features is also important for community appearance and the functions they perform for natural communities. Map 4 depicts the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, some of which are described in more detail below.

1. Landforms/Topography/Non-metallic Mineral Resources

Dekorra is situated near the eastern edge of Wisconsin's driftless area. The Town's landforms are characterized primarily by gently rolling ground moraines. Elevations range between 835 feet above sea level at the Wisconsin River and 1,080 feet in bluff areas.

There are a few small sand and gravel quarries located in Dekorra, mostly near the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin. County zoning allows nonmetallic mining, or quarrying, operations as a conditional use within the following zoning districts: Agricultural District; Agricultural District No. 2; and Industrial District.

Under State Statutes (295.20), landowners who want to register their property as a non-metallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the County where the mineral deposit is located. Columbia County does not yet have a register of marketable mineral deposits. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered nonmetallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable nonmetallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period. Registration is effective for 10 years and renewable for an additional 10 years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take effect after the registration has expired.

2. 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. Dekorra's soils are of four major associations:

- *The Lapeer-Wyocena Association* is found in a wide east-west strip across the center of Dekorra. These soils are found mostly on glaciated uplands, and are characterized by moraines, drumlins, and glaciated ridges. The drumlins are generally east-west oriented. Both Lapeer and Wyocena soils are well drained and consist of a sand/loam mix. These soils have medium fertility and low available water capacity, which may inhibit cultivation in spots. The heavily sloped and ridge areas are wooded. These soils are well suited for development.
- *The Plainfield-Okee Association* is found in the south one-third of Dekorra. The predominating landscape of these soils is sand-capped drumlins separated by low areas

of sandy outwash. These soils are generally well-drained. The sandier Plainfield soils occur in outwash plains, while loamy Okee soils are found on the drumlins. The soils are generally low in fertility and available water capacity, and are easily susceptible to drought conditions and wind erosion. Much of this soil association is wooded and provides for wildlife habitat. Increasing numbers of residential units are being constructed on this association due to its low value for farming, and its proximity to Poynette.

- *The Houghton-Adrian-Palms Association* is found in three areas of Town, all located along streams (Rocky Run, Rowan Creek, and Hinkson Creek). These soils are usually found in floodplains, and tend to be very poorly drained. Marshes are common throughout this association. These soils have low fertility and high available water capacity, and are often subject to flooding. The soils are limited in their capacity for housing or road construction. Most of the wildlife areas and hunting and fishing grounds throughout the County are associated with the *Houghton-Adrian Palms* association.
- *The Granby-Alluvial Association* is found in the extreme northwest corner of Dekorra, adjacent to the Wisconsin River. These soils are characterized by nearly level or gently sloping poorly drained soils. Available water capacity and fertility are low in this association. Flooding is occasional to frequent, and runoff is very slow. These sand soils can be seasonally dry, and subject to wind and water erosion. *Granby-Alluvial* is poorly suited to crops, although some forage, vegetable, and cash grain crops could be grown in well-drained areas. Housing, industrial, and commercial development is ill suited to this soil association, yet there has been a significant amount of housing built in these areas- mostly using holding tanks for waste disposal.

The suitability of the various soils in the Town for on-site waste treatment systems is described in Chapter Six—Utilities and Community Facilities.

3. Drainage Basins

Dekorra is located in the Lower Wisconsin River basin. The Lower Wisconsin River basin drains approximately 4,940 square miles of south-central and southwestern Wisconsin. Water quality in the basin is generally good. The primary water quality problems are caused by nonpoint sources of pollution, particularly from agricultural operations. Basins are further divided into watersheds, shown on Map 4. Most of the Town is in the Lake Wisconsin Watershed. The northeastern portion of the Town is in the Duck Creek and Rocky Run Watershed.

4. Groundwater

Groundwater resources are plentiful in the Town at both shallow and deep levels. The general geology of the region is comprised of gravel and sand over sandstone or dolomite formations. Water supplies are drawn mostly from the alluvial aquifer made up of the coarse-grained sand and gravel, and are generally of good quality. A large amount of the groundwater withdrawn and used in Dekorra is recharged locally from infiltration of precipitation.

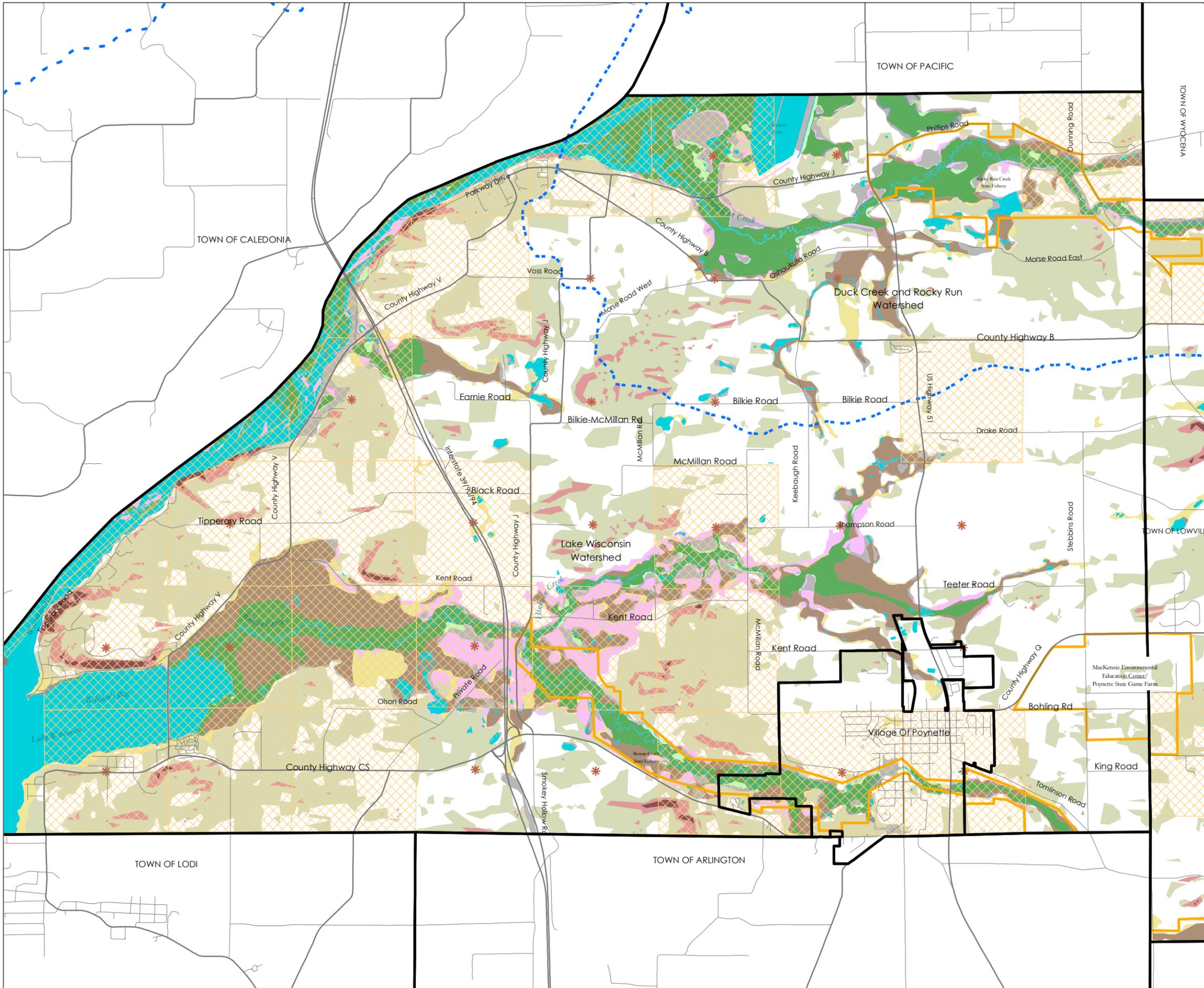
Although groundwater in Dekorra is of good quality, problems with contamination can occur. In areas of granular soils, the upper aquifers supplying water are susceptible to contamination from both surface and subsurface sources. The most common and wide-

spread groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen. Nitrate-nitrogen is highly soluble in water and is not significantly absorbed in the soil; thus it can seep readily through the soil and into the groundwater. Potential sources of nitrate pollution include on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septic application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, silage juice and decaying plant debris.

Another contaminate found in Dekorra groundwater is atrazine, which has been the most commonly used corn herbicide in Wisconsin for the past 30 years. The herbicide and its breakdown products are often found in groundwater in agricultural areas of Wisconsin. In the southeast corner of Dekorra, sections 25, 36, and the east halves of sections 26 and 35 are included in Wisconsin's Atrazine Prohibition Areas.

Dekorra Comprehensive Plan

Map 4: Natural Areas



- Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Watershed Boundaries
- Wisconsin DNR Project Boundaries
- Sections with Endangered Species
- Sections with Archaeological and Burial Sites
- Surface Water²
- Slopes 12% to 20%³
- Slopes > 20%³
- Hydric Soils Only⁴
- FEMA Floodplains Only⁵
- DNR Wetlands Only⁶
- DNR Wetlands & FEMA Floodplains
- DNR Wetlands & Hydric Soils
- DNR Wetlands & Hydric Soils & FEMA Floodplains
- Forested Areas not with other Characteristics⁷

1. Represents general areas of known occurrences of rare species and natural areas in a section, as recorded in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage inventory. Areas represented may include terrestrial species, aquatic species, or both types of species.

2. County shoreland zoning regulations require 75 foot building setbacks on all navigable waterways.

3. Slopes extracted from USGS 7.5' digital elevation models.

4. A hydric soil is a soil formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. They are generally not advised for building construction.

5. Floodplains are from the 2008 FEMA DFIRM Maps. Data was extracted from the Columbia County Dataset.

6. Wetlands extracted from WDNR's Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory, which includes mapped wetlands at least 2 acres in size derived mainly from air photo interpretation. All wetlands subject to state or federal regulations not shown.

7. Forested areas extracted from WDNR's landcover dataset. Landcover data set is a raster representation of vegetation/land cover for the State. Otherlands shown as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplain, or hydric soils may also be forested areas even though this map does not represent them as forested.

Amended: May 25, 2010

Sources: Columbia County LIO, FEMA, NRCS, & Wisconsin DNR.

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5. Surface Waters

Dekorra is bordered on the west by the Wisconsin River and the 9,000 acre Lake Wisconsin, formed by a downstream dam in the river near Prairie du Sac. The lake has a maximum depth of 39 feet. Popular with year-round residents, seasonal residents, and tourists, these waters provide recreational opportunities.

The man-made Lake Columbia is partially located in the Town. The lake was constructed as a cooling pond for the Columbia Power Plant south of Portage. Lake Columbia remains free of ice year-round due to the power plant. The lake has exceptionally high levels of fish and aquatic vegetation.



The Town has several high quality streams:

- Rowan Creek runs through the southern portion of the Town. Four miles of Rowan Creek are categorized as a Class I trout stream, and eight miles categorized as Class II. Rowan Creek has been listed as an exceptional water resource (ERW), but is also on the WisDNR's list of Section 303D impaired waters, due to both nonpoint and point source pollution.
- Hinkson Creek is a small, low gradient, coldwater, Class II tributary to Rowan Creek. Rocky Run Creek flows through Dekorra in the northern quarter of the Town. East of Highway 51 the stream is trout water, with six miles of Class II and 2 miles of Class III trout stream. The stream is buffered by wetlands.
- Rocky Run receives point source discharges from the Lake Columbia power plant (Alliant/Wisconsin Power & Light), and a tributary to the stream receives discharge from the Rio wastewater treatment plan. The creek has been ranked as a high priority for nonpoint source pollution protection, and would benefit from a pollution reduction project.

These surface waters are important to the health of the Wisconsin River. The river has been impacted both from industries (including paper making) and by non-point and point source pollution in its tributaries. Overall, the Lower Wisconsin River is classified as a diverse warm water sport fishery (WWSF). The river no longer supports commercial fishing, due to pollution. The river is home to a number of threatened and endangered species.

6. Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These are areas predicted to be inundated with floodwaters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires County regulation of development in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid property damage.

Floodplain areas in the Town are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and Hinkson Creeks, and the Wisconsin River. While floodplain areas are included on Map 4, the Na-

tional Flood Insurance Program maps produced by FEMA should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries.

7. Wetlands

Wetlands are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands cover approximately 9% of Dekorra. Wetlands in Dekorra are generally found in close vicinity to the streams. Sizeable wetland areas are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and Hinkson Creeks, and along the Wisconsin River north of the Interstate 39/90/94 bridge. The single largest wetland is just east/northeast of Whalen's Bay near the mouth of Rowan Creek.

Wetlands of at least two acres are shown on Map 4. County zoning regulates wetlands located within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond, or flowage, and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of streams or rivers, or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater. Wetlands are also subject to WisDNR or Army Corps of Engineers fill regulations.

8. Woodlands

Remaining woodlands are valuable contributors to the area's character, beauty and wildlife habitat. Due to nature of Dekorra's topography, about 1/3 of the Town contains significant areas of woodland cover. These areas generally coincide with heavily sloped, floodplain, or marginal agricultural areas. The most common species found in the woodlands are oak, hickory, maple, and basswood.



The State's Managed Forest Land (MFL) program is designed to encourage long-term investment in private forestland and promote sound forest management practices. This program is available to landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres of forestland. Participating landowners must agree to a forest management plan that includes selective harvesting. In exchange, their land is taxed at a lower rate. As of March 2002, there were 794 acres of forestland in the Town enrolled in the MFL program.

9. Steep Slopes

As shown on Map 4, slopes exceeding a 12% grade occur throughout Dekorra, but are more frequent in the central and western portions of the Town. A total of 639 acres (2% of total acreage) in the Town contain slopes of 12% or greater, and 93 acres (>1% of total acreage) contain slopes of 20% or greater. Slopes of between 12% and 20% present challenges for building site development.

Steep slopes that exceed a 20% grade are not recommended as development sites due to erosion concerns.



10. Hilltops and Ridgetops

Hilltops and ridgetops are important natural features that serve to define the horizon. While commanding impressive views, large structures (houses) constructed on top of them tend to be visually prominent to surrounding lands.

Home placement on hilltops and ridgetops can lead to a perception of greater development in the Town than if homes were placed more discretely at the base or side of hills with screened vegetation. Hilltops and ridgetops in Dekorra are generally associated with steep slope areas on Map 4.

11. Rare Species Occurrences/Natural Areas

WisDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains data on the general location and status of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species. Map 4 shows sections in Dekorra identified in the 1999 Natural Heritage Inventory as containing rare plant or animal species, is especially areas along streams, the Wisconsin River, and Lake Wisconsin. More specific information on location and type of species is available from the state's Bureau of Endangered Resources on a request basis.

12. MacKenzie Environmental Education Center/Poynette State Game Farm

The MacKenzie Environmental Education Center and Poynette State Game Farm are Department of Natural Resources' facilities located in the eastern part of Dekorra. They are unique among state facilities in their mission of environmental education.

Since its incorporation in 1934, education programs and public contacts have been emphasized. In 1961, a cluster of buildings, built as part of an economic recovery program, and 250 acres were formally set aside "to promote knowledge and wise use of Wisconsin's outdoor resources." In 1975, a resident center, authorized and funded through the Legislature, opened to accommodate overnight groups taking part in education programs.



People come from many areas of the state to attend programs at the center, ranging in age from preschool to adult. In 2001, 5,669 students attended overnight programs, and 7,459 students came to MacKenzie on day trips. The facility is also open to the general public. Exhibits and displays show some of the natural communities found in Wisconsin. Hiking trails and picnic areas provide an opportunity for outdoor experiences, and wildlife displays provide a means of learning about Wisconsin's indigenous flora and fauna. A logging museum and conservation museum are also among the attractions.

The primary role of the State Game Farm today is to provide pheasants and chicks for both public and private hunting grounds throughout Wisconsin. Wild pheasant populations in Wisconsin have declined steadily since the 1950's, due to conversion of wetland and grassland habitat to cropland and urban development. The Farm produces about

100,000 per year. Adult pheasants are raised for release on public lands, while pheasant chicks are produced and given to 75 cooperating conservation clubs in 35 counties, who raise the birds and release them on private lands open to public hunting.

13. Wisconsin DNR Project Boundaries

These are areas of land that the WisDNR has determined represent significant natural features or habitats, typically adjacent to existing publicly-owned lands that WisDNR has an interest in purchasing from willing sellers. The availability of land acquisition funds and the willingness of landowners to sell determine how much land within a project boundary is purchased in any given year. Within project boundaries, WisDNR may also pursue cooperative management of the land with private landowners.

D. Natural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Protect the Town's important natural resources.

2. Objectives

- a. Preserve streams, drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, the continuity of larger woodland areas, and other natural features.
- b. Protect surface water and groundwater quality.
- c. Prevent future problems associated with developing land too close to natural areas and on erosion prone slopes.
- d. Cooperate with other units of government on resources under shared authority.
- e. Maintain the piece and tranquility of the rural setting.

3. Policies and Programs

- a. Preserve environmental and open space corridors by **prohibiting new buildings in wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, shoreland setback areas, and on slopes greater than 20%**. Development should also be discouraged on slopes between 12% and 20% where other more appropriate sites are available. The Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code have specific regulations regarding development on slopes of 12% or greater. Steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains are shown on Map 4. The Town should support more detailed mapping of these natural resources where it is apparent that a development proposal may impact these features, existing maps are in error, or changes have occurred in the features.
- b. **Preserve special landscape features** including the Rowan, Hinkson and Rocky Run Creek Corridors, remaining undeveloped Wisconsin River frontage, bluffs and hill-tops, and larger woodland habitats.
- c. Before approving any changes in land use, **consider the impact on wildlife habitat**, potential locations of rare or threatened plant and animal species, **and archeological**

- sites** such as mound groups and ensure that the land use changes meet all applicable criteria in the Town's land division and subdivision regulations.
- d. Protect and improve the **quality of surface water** within the Town, particularly the Hinkson, Rowan, and Rocky Run Creeks. Participate in any County or State water quality improvement efforts.
 - e. Help form a broad-based coalition focused on the **long-term management of the creeks** and the watersheds.
 - f. Promote the construction of an **interconnected, low-impact trail** in the Rocky Run Creek corridor.
 - g. Enforce the Town's **Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance**. Emphasize the use of natural drainage patterns, construction site erosion control, and permanent, **ongoing stormwater management and erosion control measures** that control the quality, quantity, and temperature of water leaving any site.
 - h. To protect groundwater quality, avoid the over-concentration of on-site waste treatment systems.
 - i. Require the submittal and implementation of **nutrient/or manure management plans for high density agricultural operations** expected to have large numbers of animals in any part of the Town.
 - j. Avoid extensive development within designated **groundwater recharge areas** and steep slope areas to protect groundwater quality.
 - k. Implement ordinances pertinent to enabling **continuation of the rural quality of life** (e.g., lighting).
 - l. Follow the policies in Chapter Four: Land Use regarding **non-metallic mineral resource** sites.



E. Cultural Resource Inventory and Analysis

Preservation of historic, archeological, and other cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present and future. The following sections and Map 4 depict and describe the significant historic, archeological, cultural resources in the Town.

1. Historic Resources

The first settler of the Town and of what is now Columbia County was Wallace Rowan who entered his claim for a homestead on June 6, 1836, where he built a combination home and hotel. An area adjoining the Wisconsin River was platted and recorded in

January 1843. This was Kentucky City which had only one building, that being Lafayette Hill's Tavern. Later this site became known as Dekorra Village. In 1836, Dekorra bid and was considered to become the state capital of Wisconsin. Near here a grist mill was built in 1844 and served a wide area for many years since there was no mill in Madison, Baraboo, Portage, Wyocena or Columbus. The site was also an ideal place for a ferry to the opposite shore of the Wisconsin River (Caledonia). It was also a distributing place for lumber floated down the river.

By 1852 there were eight common and two joint school districts in Dekorra. There was the United Presbyterian Church, organized in 1863 and served by Rev. H.A. Preus, a pioneer Lutheran minister. Inch Methodist Church was completed in 1875, the total cost being \$1,600. Sunday School had been held in the Inch School before the church was built. The Dekorra Lutheran Church was organized in 1869 under the leadership of Pastor H.A. Preus. The Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad between Portage and Madison was completed in 1870. This line, still in existence, cut thru Dekorra with stations at Poynette and Hartman.

The Town has a fine collection of historic or architecturally significant buildings and sites from the Amish Era. The State Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties. The AHI includes 33 documented properties in Dekorra. These properties mainly include houses and farm buildings.

The State Historical Society also maintains a list of properties certified as significant by the National Park Service, and determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there are no properties in Dekorra listed in the State or National Registers, or listed as eligible for the Registers. However, properties may be named to the Register in the future. Several historical societies operate within the area, including the Poynette Area Historical Society, the Columbia County Historical Society, the Portage Historical Society, and the Lodi Valley Historical Society.

2. Archeological Resources

According to the State Historical Society there are 46 known archaeological sites and cemeteries in Dekorra as of August 2003 (see Map 4). This does not include all of the sites that might be present in the Town. Sites include cemeteries (church or municipal cemeteries, burial mounds, and unmarked graves), cabins and homesteads, and Native American community and burial sites. Under Wisconsin law, Native



American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Few of the sites reported to the Society have been evaluated for their importance or eligibility for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

3. Visual Character Resources

The comprehensive planning process included an analysis of visual resources that greatly enhance the unique community character or “personality” of Dekorra. Visual resources include both natural and human-altered landscapes.

Dekorra is mostly rural in character, but it has been greatly influenced by the development of Poynette, vacation and resort development along the Wisconsin River, and the Interstate. There is a great deal of residential development along the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin. Driving along the roads through the development areas along the river is reminiscent of vacation areas of northern Wisconsin. Views of Lake Wisconsin are breathtaking from the Highway V causeway.

Most of the rest of the Town remains quite sparsely settled. There, the land is rolling and mostly devoted to agriculture, open space, and woods. Cultivated flat-to-rolling fields and scattered farmsteads dominate the landscape. Fields are often farmed to road edges and there are few woodlots. Town roads have relatively little traffic, making them ideal for recreational cycling. Long views of the horizon dominate the visual experience.

F. Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Preserve Dekorra’s rural, scenic, and historic character.

2. Objectives

- a. Recognize Dekorra’s character is defined by large areas of rolling agricultural woodlands, natural areas, and the historic “Dekorra Village” area near the River.
- b. Identify and protect unique historic and archeological areas within the Town.
- c. Protect scenic views, particularly of rolling countryside and along Lake Wisconsin.

3. Policies and Programs

- a. Emphasize the value of the remaining **natural resource areas as focal points** of natural beauty and recreation (see Map 4).
- b. Promote the **nomination of historic sites** and perhaps the Dekorra Village to the National or State Register of Historic Places. Make sure that new development in these areas respects the historic integrity and small scale of these districts.
- c. Encourage **new development forms that celebrate the Town’s agricultural heritage**. Examples include grouping new homes at the end of a driveway or road to look like a historic farmstead, incorporating existing farm outbuildings in new development, and promoting new building styles and materials consistent with historic styles.

- d. In largely undeveloped areas, promote the **use of existing topography and vegetation to screen** new development from public roads.
- e. Support local festivals, fairs, farm tours, farm breakfasts, and markets that **celebrate the Town's farming heritage** and rural way of life.
- f. For the Interstate 90-94-39 corridor, work with the County to **limit additional billboards, communication towers, and unplanned development**. Work to upgrade development quality and provide an attractive gateway at the Interchange Area.