



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER
Protecting the Midwest's Environment and Natural Heritage

September 8, 2011

Robert Abboud
Village of Barrington Hills
112 Algonquin Road
Barrington Hills 60010

Dear Robert,

We are pleased to send you a copy of the third in a series of four reports focusing on Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater issued by the Environmental Law & Policy Center. An adequate supply of clean groundwater is critical to the future of many communities around the region. These reports detail a number of ways that water security can be achieved as we move forward.

This third report focuses on conservation design as a land use tool that can be used to implement several important protections for groundwater supply. The examination of conservation design for subdivisions, together with the first and second reports, lays a foundation for the fourth report, which will cover potential for water efficiency standards within residential development. Electronic copies of the reports can be found at www.elpc.org/groundwater.

The Environmental Law & Policy Center has long advocated for policy choices that ensure protection of a clean, safe water supply in groundwater-dependent areas. We focus on policies that are effective at protecting the quantity and quality of groundwater, but that also achieve additional quality-of-life benefits such as improving community aesthetics, access to open space and recreation, ecosystem habitat and even property values.

It is our hope that the results of our research will help further the conversation about protecting water supply in Chicago area communities.

Sincerely,

Jessica Dexter
Staff Attorney
**bcc: Board of Trustees
Plan Commission**

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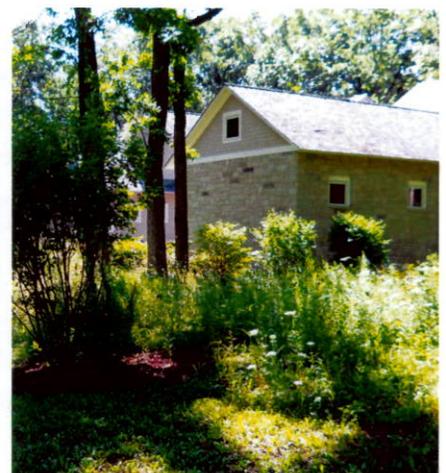
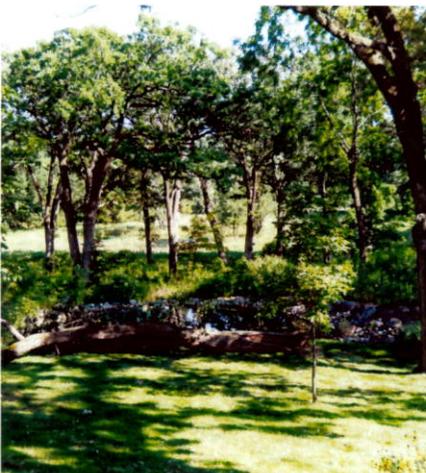
LAND USE TOOLS TO PROTECT GROUNDWATER: CONSERVATION DESIGN



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Part 3 of 4 in a Series

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Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater: Conservation Design

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Front Cover Images:

Top: Traditional neighborhood design highlighted in conservation design at Prairie Crossing, in Gray-slake, IL. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Bottom Left: This natural oak savanna is protected by conservation design at the Sanctuary of Bull Valley, in Woodstock, IL. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Bottom Center: The sign at the entrance to Deerpath Farm, in Mettawa, IL, illustrates the protected natural areas and available/existing home sites. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Bottom Right: This home in Mettawa, IL, is part of a conservation design development. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Back Cover Image: Veer Stock Photography

Introduction



Conservation design protects remnant prairie and encourages native plantings — such as these purple coneflower at the Sugar Creek Preserve in Walworth County, WI — for the enjoyment of residents and the benefit of the natural world. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

There is no need to choose between economics and the environment – conservation design for subdivisions is a smart approach to development that serves the interests of the developer, homeowner, community and natural world. “Conservation design” differs from “conventional design” – two terms that will appear frequently in this publication. When a property is subdivided, conservation design first protects the important natural features of the land and then allows flexibility to place homes¹ on the remaining area, often at the same density that would be allowed in a traditional design.

To a developer, conservation design offers design flexibility, cost savings, price premiums and unique marketing opportunities.

Homeowners interested in conservation design properties will find an emphasis on quality of life, great views and permanent access to open space for recreation and enjoyment.

A community benefits from conservation design because, without any public expenditure, such developments ensure efficient use of community resources and preserve essential functions (like groundwater recharge) that the entire community needs, now and in the future.

Finally, the natural world benefits because conservation design works with nature. Economic development can continue without displacing wildlife, destroying habitat or degrading ecosystems.

This report will detail: (1) how conservation design can preserve groundwater, generate economic development and provide other benefits; (2) the process by which conservation design can be implemented in a residential subdivision; and (3) a discussion of the benefits of making conservation design mandatory.

Benefits of Conservation Design

Groundwater Benefits

There are a multitude of reasons to choose conservation design over traditional development. But in groundwater-dependent areas that are at risk for shortages in drinking water (such as McHenry County), communities should consider requiring conservation design in certain areas in order to protect vital lands where rainwater can recharge the groundwater supply.

Conservation design subdivisions typically cost \$7,400 less per lot to build than traditional subdivisions.

As discussed in ELPC's previous report, Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater: Preserving Recharge, open space in its natural state provides the best opportunity for groundwater recharge. This is because the vegetation on the site helps to keep water where it falls so it has time to soak into soils that have not been compacted by development.

In a traditional subdivision, that rainwater would need to be managed as stormwater runoff, but conservation design recognizes that water as a resource, not a waste product. Conservation design also reduces the overall impervious surface area on a site because developed lots are sited relatively close together. When lots are closer together and designed thoughtfully, less surface area is required for roads and sidewalks to connect them.

Finally, conservation design helps to curb water use. Because conservation design leaves a large portion of a developed lot in its natural state and emphasizes using native plants in developed landscapes, these developments require much less of our precious groundwater to irrigate lawns.

As we will discuss in the final report in this series, con-

serving water use is an important tool in protecting water supply for future generations.

Economic Benefits

The economic benefits may be the most compelling advantages of conservation design. According to a statistical economic study published in 2006, conservation design subdivisions typically cost \$7,400 less per lot to build than traditional subdivisions.ⁱⁱ That's because conservation design reduces the need for land clearing and grading, reduces infrastructure costs for roads and utility runs, and often reduces the need to construct large stormwater detention basins – all of which can add up to a savings of 12% to 64% of infrastructure costs.ⁱⁱⁱ Savings are also realized through native landscaping, which saves \$4,400 to \$8,850 per acre compared to turf grass.^{iv}

What's more, despite lower development costs, conservation subdivision lots typically sell more quickly and at a price premium compared to their counterparts in a traditional subdivision. The 2006 economic study found that conservation lots sold for about \$13,000 to \$18,000 more than conventional subdivision properties and sold in an average of 9.1 months compared to 17.0 months for conventional development.^v The bottom line is, conservation design is more profitable for developers.

Conservation design can be an important tool in helping manifest community goals.

But conservation design is a good economic choice for homebuyers as well. Beyond the quality of life value of living in a home in a beautiful setting, conservation design subdivision dwellers enjoy freedom from extensive lawn care. Maintenance costs for native plantings are \$3,950 to \$4,683 less per acre per year compared to equal areas of turf grass.

^{vi} To top it off, homes in conservation subdivisions tend to appreciate more in value than homes in conventional subdivision, making it a smart real estate investment as well as a nice place to live.

Conservation design is also an economically smart choice for the community where it is located. Because of the smart placement of lots and the reduced length of streets and utility runs, the required maintenance – such as snowplowing, road resurfacing and replacement of aging pipes – is also minimized.

Other Benefits

For many towns, cities and counties that have adopted comprehensive land use plans, conservation design subdivisions can be an important tool in helping manifest community goals. Because of its flexibility and unintrusive footprint, conservation design helps set the tone for the community's character. For example:

- In a suburban neighborhood, featuring mixed residential and commercial uses and a “traditional neighborhood development” approach to home sites can inspire a greater sense of community and a neighborhood feel.
- In a rural community, conservation design can help enhance community character by conserving valuable agricultural soils on a site and allowing certain appropriate agricultural uses of that conserved open space.

A municipality might want to ensure that conservation design provides desired recreational opportunities for the community as a whole. For example, an ordinance governing conservation design might require that some or all of the conserved open space be connected to a regional walking or biking trail system, or that it be linked to a greenway system identified in the locality's comprehensive plan. Or the community might require that some portion of a conservation design subdivision be dedicated as a public park, so its benefits may be enjoyed by all residents, not just residents of the subdivision.



Conservation design allows development while directing impacts away from important natural areas on the site, like these well-established oak trees and wetland areas at the Deerpath Farm development in Mettawa, IL. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Conservation subdivisions can also protect natural features that help define a community's identity. This might mean setting aside areas including a local scenic vista, a geographic feature, well-established or old-growth trees, or remnant prairie. In addition to the benefits of managing stormwater and groundwater supply described above, setting aside environmentally sensitive areas also helps reduce flooding, prevent erosion from steep slopes and create corridors of wildlife habitat that protect biodiversity.

The Conservation Design Process for Residential Subdivisions

Conservation design is more than just “cluster development.”^{vii} Cluster development may group together houses on one portion of a lot, leaving some open space, but it does so without the same thoughtful consideration that conservation design employs. Conservation design subdivisions develop only on the least environmentally sensitive areas of a site and are designed to achieve specific conservation and quality-of-life goals. Under this model, developers work *with* nature, enhancing benefits to both residents and the natural world. To accomplish these goals, the conservation design process consists of four consecutive steps: (1)

identify conservation areas; (2) locate house sites; (3) align streets and trails; and (4) draw lot lines.

Step One: Identify Conservation Areas

The first step, identifying conservation areas, begins with an analysis of the proposed subdivision site. The aim of this analysis is to identify existing features of the site that are desirable to preserve and conditions that render certain areas unbuildable. Typically, a conservation design subdivision ordinance will specify the components that must be evaluated, but these might include:

- Topographic survey of the site, including identification of visually prominent topographic features;
- Analysis of water drainage;
- Identification of groundwater recharge areas;
- Demarcation of water features, such as streams, wetlands, swales, springs and/or vernal pools;
- Demarcation of woodlands, trees, and vegetation;
- Survey for threatened/endangered species;
- Identification of important wildlife habitat, including but not limited to that needed by threatened/endangered species;
- Identification of steep slopes;
- Soils analysis, which may indicate valuable agricultural or hydric soils required for wetlands;
- Important historic or cultural features of the site;
- Existing roads and structures;
- Existing trail systems (both onsite and nearby); and
- Current uses of adjacent properties, with special attention to adjacent parks, trails, or open space.

Once this site analysis has been assembled, it is typically reviewed by planning staff for completeness. The developer works with the municipality to identify areas of the site that are candidates to be preserved as conservation areas. A conservation design ordinance will often specify which features (such as woodlands, floodplains, wetlands, water features and sensitive groundwater recharge areas) must be set aside and protected. It is also common for an ordinance to require



Conservation design can be mixed use, incorporating appropriate commercial development into the residential development. This park is at the center of the commercial development at Prairie Crossing in Graylake, IL, just steps from a Metra station. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

that a certain percentage of the remaining buildable land also be preserved as open space (optimally between 50%-66%).

To be eligible for conservation design status, the identified “conservation areas” are required to be protected in perpetuity. This can be accomplished by a deed restriction, a conservation easement held by a qualified land conservation organization, or occasionally through a “fee simple” donation to the town or land conservation organization. The developer must work with the town and the land conservation organization to develop both short-term and long-term stewardship plans for the preserved areas to ensure that the conservation goals of the ordinance and the development are attained and maintained in the future.

Step Two: Locate House Sites

The second step is to locate appropriate sites for houses on the remaining buildable land. An ordinance will often have a formula to calculate how many units can be built, based on the net buildable area left after conservation areas are set aside. These formulas are usually based on the underlying zoning and often will be equal or near to the number of units that would have been allowed in a traditional subdivision. Some ordinances even provide density bonuses as an incentive to encourage developers to choose conservation design.

Once the number of allowable units has been identified, home sites are chosen so that they can maximize the benefits of conservation design to homeowners. The design should cluster homes so as to minimize the length of streets and utility infrastructure, without compromising privacy. The design should position each home so its residents have easy access to open space and have a nice view from their home. Views from conservation design homes often look over a long, permanently protected vista, such as a wildflower meadow, open field, or lush wetland. It is the thoughtful design at this stage that makes conservation design homes so attractive and marketable to homebuyers.

Step Three & Four: Align Streets and Trails, and Draw Lot Lines

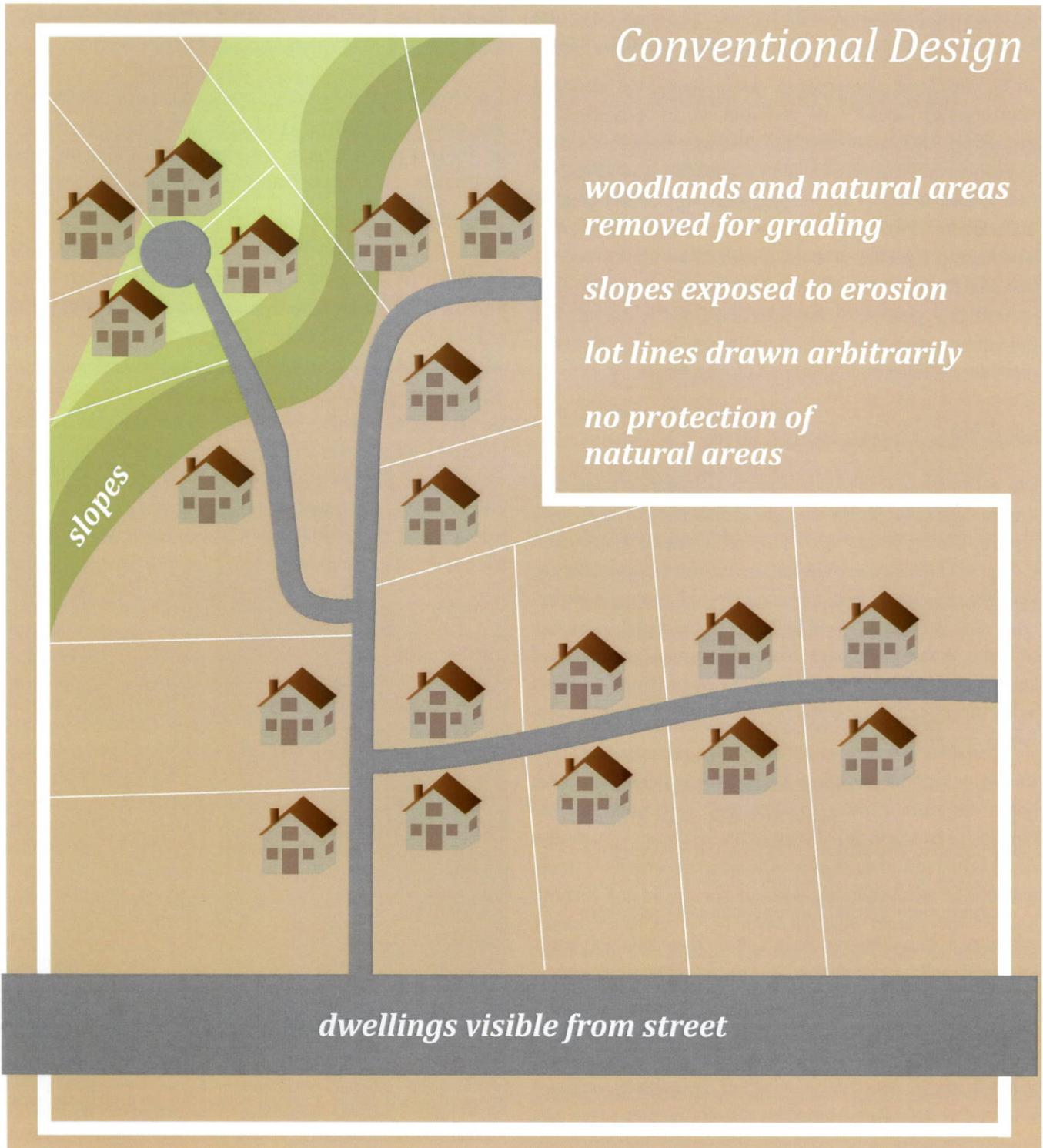
The remaining step is really a matter of connecting the dots. The placement of streets and trails is more or less directed by the placement of adjacent streets and trails, proposed house sites and any applicable setbacks. The final step is to draw lot lines among the homes. By drawing lot lines last, rather than first, a developer is able to offer a much more optimal use of the property.

When all these steps have been laid out, most municipalities require that the developer submit a “sketch plan” of the proposed configuration before moving forward with more detailed design plans. The planning entity will review the sketch plan to ensure that the impact of the development has been minimized and that environmental features of the site will not be degraded. It will look to ensure that the required percentage of open space has been slated for preservation, that road length has been minimized, and that any other major requirements will be met by the development.

Upon approval of the sketch plan, the developer undertakes more detailed design of the site and homes. Conservation design subdivisions often have more detailed requirements to help achieve objectives of a comprehensive community plan, many of which would be considered at this stage. These requirements might include: use native plants in landscaping, use best management practices for stormwater, offer a certain percentage of units as affordable housing, or design lighting so as to protect the night sky.

While the application process for a conservation design subdivision is more detailed than that for a traditional subdivision, it produces a better result that benefits developers, homebuyers and communities as well as the environment. However, despite the additional detail, the application process may well be smoother than a traditional subdivision. Conservation design tends to have a positive community image, and would-be opponents of development are more likely to see a conservation design development as a good neighbor.

Conventional V. Conservation Subdivision Design



Conservation Design

*natural areas preserved
for benefit of residents,
community and the
environment*

*steep slopes protected
from erosion*

slopes

rural views preserved

Should Conservation Design Be Required?

While providing a conservation design alternative to the traditional subdivision is almost always a good idea, there are reasons for counties and municipalities to consider requiring conservation design for future subdivisions.

Many comprehensive plans identify goals, such as preserving open space, establishing a network of walking and biking trails, preserving groundwater recharge or preserving wildlife habitat corridors. When it comes to implementing those goals, communities often look toward voluntary easements or bargain purchase agreements. While those methods are important tools, there are two major drawbacks: (1) they cost money and (2) progress toward achieving community goals will always be uncertain because they rely on voluntary action.

In groundwater-dependent areas, such as McHenry County, the goal of preserving groundwater recharge areas isn't just aspirational, it's necessary to support future development. Past development choices have already impacted the recharge potential of area aquifers – thus affecting community water supplies – so preserving the remaining important recharge areas is essential to ensure adequate water supply in the future.^{viii}

McHenry County has identified Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas and has set goals in both its Comprehensive Plan and its Water Resources Action Plan regarding protection of groundwater recharge areas. The county could work to achieve those goals by seeking to purchase important areas through conservation easements or “fee simple” arrangements. But budgets are tight, and it is likely that not very much land would end up being protected. If the county instead required any proposed subdivision in a Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area to follow the Conservation Design Standards outlined in its ordinance, it would be a win-win. The county would ensure groundwater recharge protection at no cost to taxpayers, while allowing

development to continue.

To put the value of mandatory conservation design for subdivisions in perspective, consider this: since 2005, 59 subdivisions have been proposed in unincorporated McHenry County, covering more than 4,600 acres of land.^{ix} Under the existing, mostly- voluntary regime (discussed below), only seven of those developments were proposed as conservation design subdivisions, covering just over 500 acres. Amending the ordinance now to include mandatory conservation design in a groundwater protection overlay district helps ensure that future opportunities to protect open space and groundwater recharge are not lost.

Examples of mandatory conservation design ordinances are provided in the next section. Counties, cities and towns that are groundwater-dependent should consider amending any existing conservation design ordinance or adopting one as part of the zoning code following the models described here. The ordinance should:

- (1) require conservation design within areas of a groundwater protection overlay district;
- (2) require that groundwater recharge potential be assessed as part of the initial site assessment;
- (3) specify that groundwater recharge areas are conservation features to be permanently protected;
- (4) require groundwater-friendly best management practices, such as using native plantings, preserving natural drainage patterns and implementing stormwater best management practices that encourage infiltration.

Conservation design benefits developers and homeowners and is a no-cost way for communities to help assure clean adequate water supply for future generations.

Since 2005, 59 subdivisions have been proposed in unincorporated McHenry County ... only seven of those developments were proposed as conservation design ...

Examples of Mandatory Conservation Design Subdivision Ordinances



Conservation design affords residents permanently protected vistas of natural areas and easy access to walking and biking paths, as demonstrated at the Prairie Crossing development in Grayslake, IL. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Village of Homer Glen, Illinois

In 2006, the Village of Homer Glen (in Will County, IL) passed one of the strongest conservation design ordinances in the country.

The ordinance requires that 20-50% of a development site be conserved as permanently-protected, publicly-owned open space. Homes must be sited in clusters of 5-20 units, and 90% of lots must directly abut the common open space.

These requirements pertain to subdivisions 10 acres and larger within the Village's Residential Conservation Overlay District (6 of 9 residential zoning districts). Exempt properties include commercial subdivisions, areas with "estate zoning" and areas not served by water and sewer, although any subdivision can "opt in."

Because the ordinance was adopted just before the economic downturn, no developments have yet qualified

for the ordinance. Once implemented, the Village estimates this approach could protect 1,000 new acres of open space.

Town of La Grange, Wisconsin

With a population of about 2,400 people, the Town of La Grange, Wisconsin, is a gateway to Wisconsin's Kettle Moraine state forest. Abundant natural areas attract people from all over the region for hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting and snowmobiling. In 2004, the Town of La Grange adopted an ordinance that requires conservation design for all subdivision developments in the town. Rather than reinvent the wheel, the Town of LaGrange simply incorporated by reference the Conservation Design Standards for Walworth County (in which the town is located).

One of the specific goals of the Walworth County



Conservation design can accommodate many types of housing, ranging from modest affordable homes to upscale suburban residences. This photo was taken at the Sanctuary of Bull Valley development in Woodstock, IL. (Photo: Jessica Dexter, ELPC)

Conservation Development Design ordinance is “utilizing stormwater management practices to replenish aquifers and to recharge groundwater supplies through infiltration measures.” The Walworth County ordinance follows the four-step procedure described in this report. Depending on the underlying zoning, 20% to 60% of the net buildable area of a site must be preserved. Types of conservation areas are ranked by order of priority, and groundwater recharge is listed among the secondary priorities of the ordinance. Density bonuses can be earned by incorporating certain best management practices into the site design.

Under the Town of La Grange ordinance, the developer works with the County for design and approval, but submits the Existing Resources and Site Analysis Map, Sketch Plan and Conservation Land Ownership and Maintenance documents to the Town Board. The Town Board must approve the Sketch Plan and Land Ownership and Maintenance documents as well as the preliminary and final plat.

Town of Lyons, Wisconsin

The Town of Lyons, also in Walworth County, Wisconsin, requires conservation design for subdivisions larger than

20 acres in 9 of its residential, agricultural and commercial zoning districts if the subdivision will result in more than four parcels. The ordinance requires a developer to identify “conservation themes” for the development, such as forest stewardship, water quality protection or farmland preservation. The Town of Lyons’ conservation design ordinance follows the four step process described in this report and requires that 60% of gross acreage be set aside as open space. One unique feature of the ordinance is a limitation on the percentage of the lot that can be impervious (see ELPC’s previous report, *Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater: Preserving Recharge* for more information on impervious surface limitations).

McHenry County, Illinois

McHenry County, Illinois, adopted the most recent version of its Zoning Ordinance Addendum, “Conservation Design Developments: Standards and Procedures,” in 2009. The ordinance is voluntary for any subdivision, but it also requires conservation design for subdivisions if certain triggers are met. The ordinance is fairly strong, but improvements could be made in order to more effectively protect groundwater recharge areas.

McHenry County's conservation design ordinance applies to both residential and non-residential subdivisions in unincorporated McHenry County. Any subdivision may voluntarily opt into conservation design standards and be eligible for a density bonus that can be earned by incorporating certain features identified in the ordinance. The ordinance requires 40% to 70% of the subdivided lot to be left as open space, based on the applicable zoning district. The number of units allowed is calculated based on 90% of the gross area and the underlying zoning classification.

The ordinance lists a number of purposes it seeks to accomplish, among which two are related to groundwater protection:

- "To preserve the hydrologic condition and infiltrative capability of the soil by minimizing mass grading and impervious surfaces."
- "To preserve natural groundwater recharge functions and protect the quality of surface water and groundwater."

There are several ways that those objectives are embodied in the ordinance, but they could be improved upon.

The conservation design standards become mandatory in McHenry County if "automatic" or "cumulative" triggers are met, but subdivisions with five or fewer lots are exempt. The automatic triggers are based on proximity to high-habitat-value natural areas or high-quality streams, rivers, lakes or wetlands. The cumulative triggers look at the lot plus 200 feet surrounding on all sides of the lot. If 20% or more of that area consists of features such as wetlands, floodplains, kettle holes, woodlands, savannas, remnant prairies, publicly-owned or private deed-restricted natural open spaces and preserves, then the cumulative trigger is met and the subdivision must follow conservation design standards.

There are some groundwater-related features included on the cumulative trigger list as well: soils with "excessive permeability," "high leach potential," or "high poten-

tial for aquifer contamination" and Class III Special Resource Groundwater Areas (as designated by the Illinois Pollution Control Board). However, it is unclear from the ordinance whether those definitions were meant to include the areas identified in McHenry County's Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area map, nor is it clear what the threshold for "excessive" or "high" should be.

The McHenry County conservation design ordinance includes several features that help protect groundwater. To start, each conservation design subdivision needs to identify the conservation goals and objectives for that project. Groundwater recharge protection and water quality preservation and enhancement are both suggested goals listed in the ordinance. When the site survey is conducted (as part of "Step One" described in this report), the soils assessment must include assessments of permeability, leach potential, groundwater recharge potential and aquifer sensitivity. Then, as conservation areas are identified, developers must minimize encroachment on sensitive recharge areas in order to ensure they do their job to clean and recharge groundwater.

Several other required measures, such as preserving natural drainage patterns, stabilizing soils, and preserving natural vegetation, also help to optimize recharge potential on a site. Finally, the ordinance specifies that the wastewater management option chosen for a site must maximize recharge, but protect groundwater, surface water and environmentally sensitive areas from pollution impacts.

All in all, McHenry County has a conservation design ordinance that is fairly strong on groundwater, but it should be amended so that conservation design is required in certain areas – such as within a groundwater protection overlay district (see ELPC's previous report, *Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater: Overlay Districts*), or if the site contains groundwater recharge areas as identified on the county Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area map. Alternatively, the county could include sensitive aquifer recharge areas as an "automatic trigger" under the current ordinance configuration.

Resources

RANDALL ARENDT, CONSERVATION DESIGN FOR SUBDIVISIONS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CREATING OPEN SPACE NETWORKS, DC: Island Press 1996.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION: AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION, available at http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dir/documents/conserv_subdiv_Model_ordinance_Feb2001.pdf.

WALWORTH COUNTY, WI CONSERVATION DESIGN ORDINANCE, available at: <http://www.co.walworth.wi.us/Government%20Center/Land%20Use%20and%20Resource%20Management/Planning.aspx>.

MCHEMRY COUNTY, IL CONSERVATION DESIGN ORDINANCE, available at: <http://www.co.mchenry.il.us/departments/planninganddevelopment/Documents/Ordinances/Conservation%20Design%20Addendum.pdf>.

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STEVE WRIGHT, "CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS: GOOD FOR THE LAND, GOOD FOR THE POCKETBOOK", On Common Ground (Winter 2006) available at: <http://www.greenerprospects.com/PDFs/ConservationSubdivisions-Wright-0pt.pdf>.

Endnotes

ⁱ *Conservation Design is also appropriate for commercial subdivisions, and follows the same principles. For ease of explanation, however, this report will only discuss residential conservation design subdivisions.*

ⁱⁱ *Mohamed, Rayman, "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions: Price Premiums, Improvement Costs and Absorption Rates" 41.3 Urban Affairs Review 376-399 (Jan. 2006).*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Conservation Research Institute, "Changing Cost Perceptions: An Analysis of Conservation Development," p 3 (Feb. 2005).*

^{iv} *Id. at 5-7.*

^v *Mohamed, Rayman, "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions: Price Premiums, Improvement Costs and Absorption Rates" 41.3 Urban Affairs Review 376-399 (Jan. 2006).*

^{vi} *Conservation Research Institute, "Changing Cost Perceptions: An Analysis of Conservation Development," p 5-7 (Feb. 2005).*

^{vii} *For a comparison, see Natural Lands Trust, "Conservation Design versus Typical Cluster Regulations," available at: http://www.greenerprospects.com/PDFs/GG_vs_Cluster_5-15-01.pdf.*

^{viii} *See ELPC's previous report: Land Use Tools to Protect Groundwater: Preserving Recharge available at elpc.org.*

^{ix} *Due to the economic downturn, not all proposed subdivisions have been built.*



Environmental Law & Policy Center

The Environmental Law & Policy Center is the Midwest's leading public interest environmental legal advocacy and eco-business innovation organization. We develop and lead successful strategic advocacy campaigns to improve environmental quality and protect our natural resources. We are public interest environmental entrepreneurs who engage in creative business dealmaking with diverse interests to put into practice our belief that environmental progress and economic development can be achieved together. ELPC's multidisciplinary staff of talented and experienced public interest attorneys, environmental business specialists, public policy advocates and communications specialists brings a strong and effective combination of skills to solve environmental problems.

ELPC's vision embraces both smart, persuasive advocacy and sustainable development principles to win the most important environmental cases and create positive solutions to protect the environment. ELPC's teamwork approach uses legal, economic and public policy analysis, and communications advocacy tools to produce successes. ELPC's strategic advocacy and business dealmaking involves proposing solutions when we oppose threats to the Midwest environment. We say "yes" to better solutions; we don't just say "no."

ELPC was founded in 1993 and has achieved a strong track record of successes on national and regional clean energy development and pollution reduction, transportation and land use reform, and natural resources protection issues. ELPC's creative public advocacy effectively links environmental progress and economic development together and improves the quality of life in our Midwestern communities.



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