

6. Goals, Objectives, & Strategies

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify those actions needed to advance protection, conservation and enhancement of critical natural resources of this county, with an emphasis on priority wetlands, forests and riparian areas, which will result in improved watershed health. The strategies identified will provide guidance to both the public and private sectors on methods that can be utilized to protect and enhance these natural resources and ecological assets while encouraging growth in a sustainable manner.

The three goals of the Watersheds Plan are:

1. Protect and enhance the natural resources of Portage County
2. Encourage sustainable development in Portage County
3. Encourage public awareness of and involvement in watershed health and protection

The first goal's aim is the natural resources themselves – with objectives and strategies that directly conserve and manage wetlands, forests and riparian areas with the underlying goal of preserving water quality. The second goal is the educational component of the Plan with many organizations and agencies participating in getting the word about water quality protection and watershed health to the public, from grade school age children through adults, government workers, and local officials. Establishment of local watershed groups to create broad based stakeholder interest and to promote conservation and protection within local watersheds is a main objective and one that will help carry the county-wide plan beyond its more general strategies. The third goal concentrates on how growth will occur in Portage County and ways to make it more environmentally friendly.

Strategies include a mix of incentives, regulatory and legislative measures, new policies, and educational actions needed to implement the goals and objectives of this plan. Watersheds and ecosystems do not conform to political boundaries and public and private partnerships that span these boundaries will need to be forged to effectively carry out many of these strategies. Our economic and social well being and the quality of life for ourselves and future generations are dependent on ensuring we have a healthy environment and livable communities. These strategies are some steps we can take as individuals, groups and as a community to protect what is of immeasurable value to us all.