

INTRODUCTION

From time to time, reviewing and updating the Town's comprehensive plan is necessary. These updates are critical to maintaining up-to-date information and to ensure the comprehensive plan meets the present needs of its residents. Working off the successes contributed by the 25-member land use committee between 1999 and 2002, this amendment continues to use the majority of facts and findings developed throughout that process. Demographic and other data analysis were updated along with the addition of chapter narrative.

The Town of Spider Lake is located in northeastern Sawyer County and abuts Bayfield County to the north and Ashland County to the east (Map 1). Comprised of three civil townships, 6 miles by 18 miles in size, the eastern two-thirds of the Town lies within the boundary of the Chequamegon National Forest and is characteristic of northern Wisconsin's lake and forest region.

Surface water resources are abundant with 50 named lakes and unnamed small lakes, most of which are in the Chequamegon National Forest. Lakes within the Town have a tradition of providing quality resort and guest cabin facilities; of which, many still remain as important contributors to the Town's economy.

The demand for lakefront property and lake access continue to cause increased development pressure on lakes throughout the Town, threatening lakes with overcrowding and the problems associated with overuse. At the same time, the demand for off-lake development, particularly residential housing, has increased and has begun to change the character of the rural landscape.

The questions of maintaining northwood's character, maintaining and improving surface water quality of lakes, and providing economic sustainability to meet community needs continue to be major issues facing the Town of Spider Lake.

The Town of Spider Lake is the only Township in Sawyer County that administers its own comprehensive zoning and shoreland ordinance and has done so since 1967 and is the first Town in the County to administer and implement zoning.

The comprehensive plan will continue to provide Town officials with a guide for reviewing subdivision plats, certified survey maps, rezoning requests, and other land use proposals. In addition to the public sector, the plan will also benefit the private sector by providing a level of assurance as to having a comprehensive plan and vision for the future.

PLANNING ASSUMPTION

Individual residents, local officials, groups, and businesses all take actions based upon assumptions, real or perceived. If the goal of town planning is to provide a blueprint or framework to guide and regulate new development and other activities, then a number of assumptions can be made about what to do as a result of current and pending concerns. In view of discussion of issues, a number of “assumptions” can be set forth that will serve as a basis for the comprehensive plan. While these assumptions were generated in 2002, the statements continue to be appropriate for future planning for today and beyond. These assumptions, in no order, are:

1. There will be an increasing demand for housing of all types in the Town.
2. The existing growth rate will continue.
3. Development pressure on shorelands will continue to increase.
4. As shoreland property becomes unavailable, development of off-lake property will increase.
5. There will be an increase in the demand for additional or improved public services, roads, and facilities.
6. The Town can help direct desirable new development location without additional tax dollars.
7. The Town's "northwood's" character will continue to be an extremely important consideration of the economy and quality of life.
8. The Town of Spider Lake and Sawyer County can continue a cooperative process for improving land use planning and growth management particularly within the shorelands in the Town.
9. The Town will increase building and other permit fees to cover the cost of ordinance generation and enforcement as necessary.
10. The Town can initiate a cooperative planning process with the U.S. Forest Service to improve and maintain recreational opportunities, forest economy, and “northwood's” character.

Together, all members of the Town can contribute to a process that explores past and current trends, thus translating the known to projected or preferred alternatives that meets the majority of interests. With all processes, a concerted effort on the behalf of all partners, overlapping and adjoining jurisdictions and others can provide an outcome where factors such as rural and northwood's character remains, all types of land use activity compliment and protect the natural environment and the town continues to be a vibrant community of blessed people.