

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preservation of historic, archeological, cultural and scenic resources in the Town of Star Prairie will foster a sense of pride in the community, improve quality of life, contribute to the preservation of rural character, encourage low-impact tourism and provide an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present and future.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

In 1983, the Wisconsin State Historical Society compiled a historic resources list of historic sites in Wisconsin communities. The historic resources list for Star Prairie does not include any historic sites that are listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. It does include archeological sites that are included in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory database and many historic sites identified through local historical groups, newspaper stories and other resources. Since the list was created, many resources may have been moved, lost or changed.

Using the historic resources list as a starting point, the Star Prairie Plan Commission members identified additional sites using local residents, historic documents and other state resources such as the Century Farm and Home and Sesquicentennial programs. Much of the information was gathered during the development of the Community Background section. A final listing of Star Prairie's historic resources is identified below. Please note that some sites are not specifically identified to provide protection for the resource and property owners from trespassing, sight-seeing and looting.

- The old Town Hall, also known as the Riverview School, Johannesburg, built in 1923, CTHs C and CC, Section 21.
- Oakland Cemetery, platted in 1893, CTH CC, Section 13.
- Cemetery at the St. Croix County Health Center, CTH K, Section 35.
- Unnamed Gravesite, Section 25.
- Phillips' Graves, Section 36.
- Rivard Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 31.
- Maitrejean Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 30.
- SCA and other Unnamed Historic and Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 25.
- Orville Mosher Collection Prehistoric Campsite/village, Sections 8, 9 & 36
- Riverdale Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 30.
- Unnamed Site Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 11.
- Unnamed Site Prehistoric and Woodland Campsite/village, Sections 2 & 3.
- Airport Fill, Prehistoric Campsite/village, Section 25.
- Hatfield Park, Prehistoric and historic Campsite/village, Section 36.
- Possible Indian Mound and Prehistoric Campsite/village around Strand Lake, Section 23.
- Riverdale Dam Powerhouse on Riverdale Flowage, CTH C, Section 31.
- Huntingdon dam structure footings & remnants located on the Apple River, St. Croix County's Apple River County Park Property, Section 11.
- McClure dam structure footings & remnants located on the Apple River, Harlan Vehrs & Leon Orr properties, Section 14.

- Campbell's Mill structure footings & remnants located near the flume and behind the Cedar Creek Inn on Cedar Creek, Section 11.
- Pamela & Bruce Emerson Century Farm, 2087 CTH CC, established 1889, 118 years, Section 24.
- Lyle and Ruth Halvorson Century Farm, 1987 93rd Street, established 1881, 126 years, Section 29.
- Ron Engh Barn, site of first Barn Art Fair.
- Squaw Lake School, now a single-family home, Section 9.
- First School in Star Prairie, now the Genevieve Francois Farm Granary, Section 23.
- Wall Street School, now a single-family home known as the Berget House, Section 23.
- Riverdale School, now a single-family home, Section 29.
- Gerald Backes Windmill & Farmstead, 110th St., Section 28.
- Doug Rivard Farmstead, Polk/St. Croix Road, Section 4.
- Jeff Levy & MaryEllen Stewart House & Farmstead, 110th St., Section 21.
- Genevieve Francois House & Farmstead, CTH CC, Section 23.
- Bob & Alice Talmage Windmill, 118th St., Section 18.
- Harlan Vehrs Windmill, CTH C, Section 14.

Mapped archeological sites are predominantly burial sites. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from intentional disturbance.

The town should make a request to the State Historical Society for more detailed information when a specific development proposal is offered on land in an area where a known historic or archeological site has been mapped, if its location is not readily apparent.

The Town of Star Prairie should work with the developers, the county and the state to preserve the historic farmsteads, barns and outbuildings that contribute to the town's agricultural heritage, rural character and aesthetic beauty and create a unique community.

Additional historic or archeological resources could be identified in the town through an individual or joint effort to create a countywide survey of historic and archeological resources. The State Historical Society provides survey funding on an annual basis, with applications due in November. There is presently no local match requirement.

HISTORIC RESOURCE PROGRAMS

Once resources are identified, they can be protected through a variety of techniques. One option is listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Register of Historic Places programs. There are several benefits that come with being listed, such as eligibility for state and federal income tax credits for rehabilitation, use of a special historic building code and protective negotiations when government-funded or assisted projects (i.e. roads) threaten the resources. They can also be valued elements in tourism.

The "Barn Again!" program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Successful Farming magazine has been a successful and visible program for recognizing, rewarding and encouraging the preservation of historic farm buildings.

Another popular program, the Barns Preservation Initiative, to help owners rehabilitate and preserve Wisconsin's barns was begun in 1994 by the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin Extension and the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation. This program recognizes the importance of the state's agricultural heritage as embodied in barns, farmhouses, outbuildings and landscapes and has initiated steps to help owners and organizations to preserve and reuse those cultural resources. Workshops that address the preservation of barns have been conducted, informational and technical materials have been prepared, and plans to make additional resources available and to address other rural preservation topics are underway.

Star Prairie can continue to promote the community's farming heritage by supporting local festivals, fairs, markets, farm tours or farm breakfasts.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic beauty is an important cultural resource in Star Prairie. There are numerous local areas that offer stunning views of the landscape, landmarks (i.e. hills) and bodies of water. In the following list, various resources and agencies have been consulted and the Town Plan Commission has identified areas of high scenic value where there should be preservation efforts.

Scenic Resources Town of Star Prairie

SITE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION & SIZE
Apple River	The stream velocity of this short, steep river once powered as many as 70 mills, several of which became settlements. There are several very scenic sites. Canoeing from Huntingdon to the Riverdale Flowage is popular. Tubing also occurs on short stretches, especially below Huntingdon where there are short, fast waters. There are some wide wetlands below Johannesburg and several areas of the river are still very natural and undeveloped.	Sections 14, 15, 21 & 29
Louie Lake on the Apple River	Public land ownership and a public access to Louie Lake and its associated wetlands is very desirable for protection of the fishery and water resources.	Sections 15 & 22
Apple River Wetlands	Wetland complexes with broad grass wetlands provide water quality protection, fish habitat and open space.	Sections 21 & 22
Strand Lake	Possible historic Indian mound, potentially a significant fishery, may need aeration. A valuable resource for public access and water resource protection.	Sections 22 & 23
Apple River Unnamed Tributary Creek	There are three unnamed tributary creeks that feed into the Apple River. They are all identified as trout streams and have native brook trout in them. Two are in the Village of Star Prairie. The third is about 200 feet long located at the north end of section 14.	Section 14
Prairie Flats North WPA	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Waterfowl Production Area managed for waterfowl habitat with ongoing wetland and prairie restoration. Open for hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation and wildlife observation and photography. Motorized vehicles and horseback riding are not allowed.	Sections 5, 6, & 8 220 Acres
Prairie Flats South WPA	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Waterfowl Production Area managed for waterfowl habitat with ongoing wetland and prairie restoration. Open for hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation and wildlife observation and photography. Motorized vehicles and horseback riding are not allowed.	Section 7 320 Acres
Squaw Lake Wetlands	Wetlands are largely depressional areas in woodlands and in some cropland and pastureland. Soils are generally very light and wetlands are widely scattered. They are quite picturesque with many areas of open water with aesthetically pleasing aquatic plants such as water lilies and other emergents. Waterfowl use is high. Some of these wetlands are marginal fish ponds and serve as focal points for many resident and migratory forms of wildlife.	Sections 5, 6, 7 & 8
South Cedar Bay Landing	Boardwalk to winter ice-fishing and summer canoe access, benches, picnic tables & parking lot. Owned and maintained by the Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust.	Section 3 1.3 Acres

SITE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION & SIZE
McMurtrie Preserve	Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust education property with access to Cedar Lake and Cedar Creek. Facilities being developed include improved road access, pavilion, toilet facilities, trails, pedestrian lake access and parking lot.	Section 2 65 Acres
Cedar Creek	Easement or acquisition along Cedar Creek between the McMurtrie Preserve and St. Croix County's Apple River Property to connect these two resources and protect the water quality.	Sections 2 & 11
Remnant Prairie Sites	There are two high-quality remnant prairie sites in the Town that would be a high priority for protection by the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area of the DNR.	Sections 22 & 28
Wetlands	Wetlands along 110 th Street are valuable for waterfowl production and wildlife areas.	Section 27 80 Acres
New Richmond Archery Club	Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust is acquiring the land from the club for open space preservation.	Section 33 40 Acres
Star Prairie Flats	High quality agricultural production area with high historic and agricultural resource significance to Star Prairie and St. Croix County. Identified as an agricultural heritage area in 1976.	Sections 4, 5, 6 & 7 1,000 acres
110 th Street	This scenic road has wetlands, historic farmstead and native prairie along it and is an excellent candidate for the state's rustic road designation.	Sections 21, 22, 27 & 28, from CTH C to 192 nd Ave.
Old Mill Road	This scenic road has wetlands, historic farmlands, native prairie, the Apple River County Park and the remnants of the McClure Dam structure along it. It is an excellent candidate for the state's rustic road designation.	Sections 10 & 11, from CTH CC to CTH H

Sources: *Heritage Areas of St. Croix County, UW-Extension 1976; Natural Area Inventory, West Central Wisconsin 1976; Wisconsin DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, St. Croix County Parks Department and Town Plan Commission 2007*

SCENIC RESOURCE PROGRAMS

One technique for preservation of scenic views is to require a viewshed analysis at the time of development. Amendments to the community's subdivision ordinance would be necessary. A viewshed analysis would identify the places from where the new development could be seen from other locations and the impact of the view that would result if development occurred in the manner proposed. New development should be designed, located and landscaped in a manner that does not detract from these scenic views.

A second technique for preservation of scenic views is the state and federal "rustic road" and "scenic byway" programs to preserve and celebrate particularly scenic road corridors. State "rustic roads" designations would be best suited for scenic town roads. To qualify, a roadway must be substantially undeveloped and have outstanding natural features, including native vegetation, abundant wildlife, open areas or agricultural vistas that make the area unique. The federal "scenic byway" program may be best suited for state or county highways. The town should work with the county to explore possibilities, advantages and disadvantages of these programs.

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Goal: Enhance and maintain the Town of Star Prairie's cultural and scenic resources and rural character.

Objectives:

1. Identify and preserve the town's agricultural, cultural, historic and archeological resources that recognize the community's pre-settlement and early settlement periods.
2. Identify and protect cultural, historic, archeological and scenic resources.
3. Work with other units of government to develop and enforce appropriate land use regulations to maintain rural residential quality.
4. Prohibit incompatible land uses from locating within or next to residential areas.
5. Encourage the preservation of historically and architecturally significant structures and sites in the town.
6. Encourage the preservation of the town's scenic resources.
7. Protect scenic roadways in the town.

Policies:

1. Explore various uses of the old town hall and develop an operational plan for it.
2. Cooperate with the State Historical Society, St. Croix County, surrounding communities and local agencies on a comprehensive survey of historic and archeological resources in the town.
3. Maintain an inventory of historic, archaeological and scenic resources.
4. Provide the inventory for reference and discussion before and during consideration of land development proposals.
5. Encourage private landowners to protect and, if necessary, rehabilitate identified cultural, historic, archeological and scenic resources when specific sites are proposed for development.
6. Support zoning and subdivision regulations that are intended to prohibit incompatible land uses.
7. Work with the county to enforce property maintenance codes to maintain rural residential quality and appearance.



Star Prairie's Old Town Hall on the Apple River near Johannesburg is an important cultural resource for the town. Photo by Kathy Mlynarczyk.

8. Support local festivals, fairs, farm tours, farm breakfasts and markets that celebrate the town's farming heritage and rural way of life.
9. Encourage events that promote the town's historical past and rural heritage.
10. Support the New Richmond Preservation Society as a local repository for historical materials; also encourage residents to donate items to the historic materials repository that the society maintains.
11. Support the designation of 110th Street and Old Mill Road as rustic roads to be added to the state's rustic road system.



The local business, River's Edge, has been in Star Prairie since 1921. Photo by Kathy Mlynarczyk.

