

2024-2033 MARATHON COUNTY

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

MARATHON COUNTY







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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Marathon County has a strong attachment to the area's croplands and woodlands. These are our working lands and the foundation of the local agricultural industry. Although less than three (3) percent of the county population is directly engaged in farming, the region's cultural identity with farming is expressed in our local celebrations and community values. Based upon the opportunities and challenges facing the agricultural community, Marathon County is faced with the decisions of how to respond through programs and policies to support agriculture and the businesses that rely on it. Sound policies provide the rationale to leverage the State and Local resource opportunities provided by the Farmland Preservation Program to realize the County's community and economic development goals.

The Farmland Preservation Plan document is an element of Marathon County's Comprehensive Plan. On December 31, 2024, the current Farmland Preservation Plan from 2013 is set to expire. The following document is an update to the current Farmland Preservation Plan and is intended to fulfill the statutory requirements of both the Farmland Preservation Plan (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) and the agricultural element of the County's Comprehensive Plan (s 66.1001(2), WI Statutes). Following certification of the updated Plan by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and adoption of the updated Plan by the Marathon County Board of Supervisors, this Farmland Preservation Plan will guide and manage growth and development of land use in a manner that will preserve the rural character and protect the agricultural industry and natural resources of the county, and will support the Marathon County Comprehensive Plan's overarching goal of Marathon County being the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in Wisconsin. This Plan will also further Marathon County's vision of being a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business, and will provide Marathon County, local communities, agricultural producers, agri-business, and County landowners access to various program opportunities, including the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program and associated Farmland Preservation tax credits.

History and Status of Farmland Preservation in Marathon County

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan provides a vision and guidelines for growth, development, and land preservation in Marathon County in the future. It focuses on Marathon County's land use planning and zoning approach to farmland preservation. This Plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions for how Marathon County intends to preserve agricultural production capacity, farmland, soil and water resources, and rural character. At the same time, this Plan is designed to accommodate compatible growth in planned locations, forms, and densities—particularly focused in locations with sufficient infrastructure and physical characteristics to sustain development. The overarching objective of this Plan is to contribute to the health, safety, and prosperity of the County.



The State of Wisconsin's adoption of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program in 1977 initiated the first statewide attempt to address agricultural preservation. In 1982, Marathon County adopted its first Farmland Preservation Plan. The Plan was implemented through a combination of zoning, via "Exclusive Agriculture" zoning districts, and Farmland Preservation Agreements (i.e., 15 – 25-year contracts between landowners and DATCP) in areas of the County that did not adopt Exclusive Agriculture zoning. In 2009, the State of Wisconsin adopted the Working Lands Initiative as part of the state's 2009-2011 biennium budget process. This legislation included four (4) main components, three (3) of which are still in effect, including: 1) Modernization of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program. 2) Establishment of Agricultural Enterprise Areas. 3) Increased Farmland Preservation tax credit opportunities and certainty of credit value. In 2013, DATCP certified, and Marathon County adopted, its second Farmland Preservation Plan, as required by Chapter 91, WI Statutes. The 2013 Farmland Preservation Plan was a comprehensive re-write of the 1982 Plan, and had a 10-year certification period, which was extended one year until December 31, 2024.

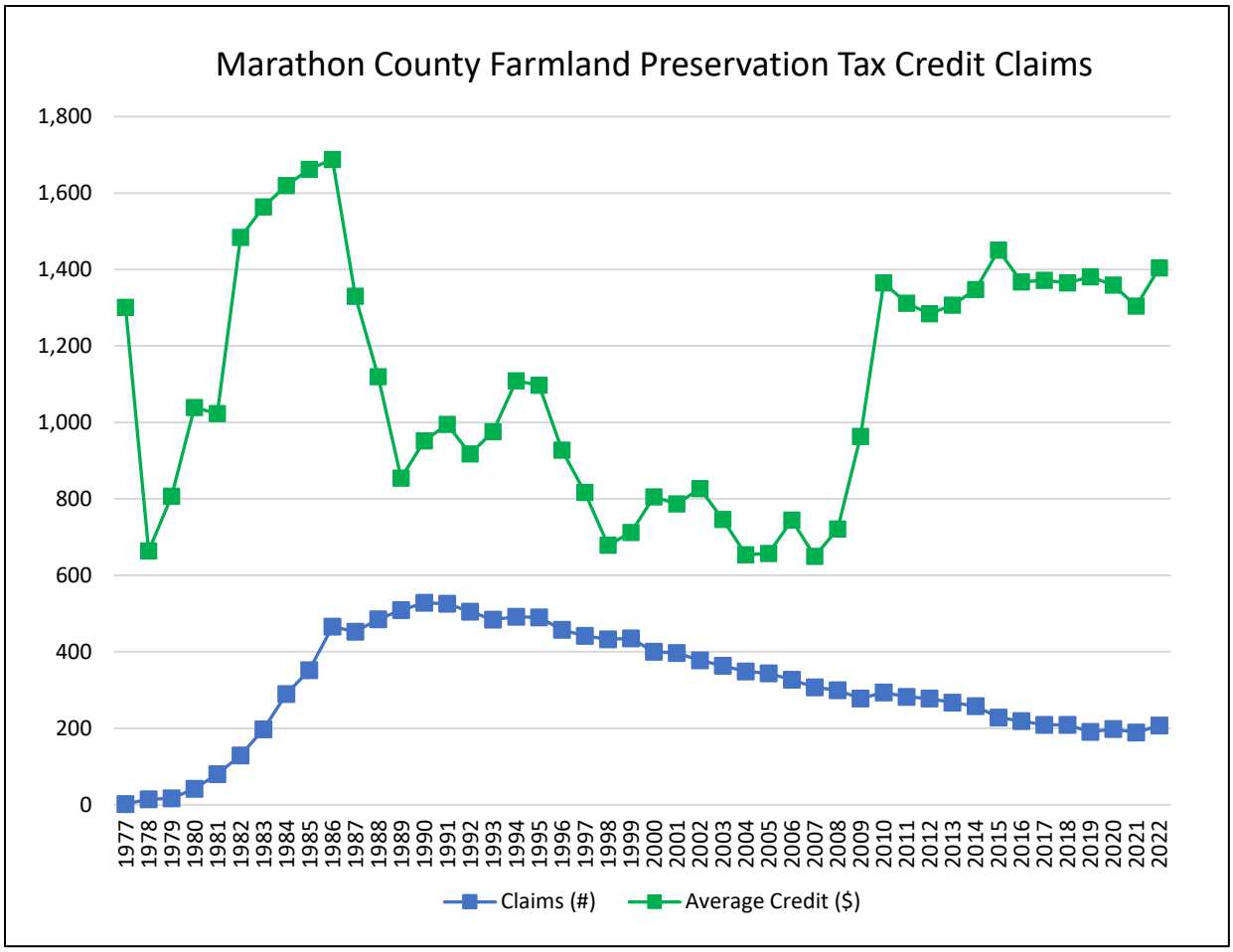


Figure 1-1: Marathon County Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Claims

Chapter 2: FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Requirements for participation in the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program are identified in Chapter 91, WI Statutes, and Farmland Preservation Plans must address specified elements. Farmland Preservation Plan elements are mandatory for counties that want to make Farmland Preservation tax credits available to eligible landowners. Some flexibility exists for how counties prepare their Farmland Preservation Plans.

The Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department (CPZ) received a grant from DATCP to assist in the required decennial update of the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan. CPZ staff were the primary authors of the Plan update, with data and information assistance provided by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The Plan update is intended to meet the requirements identified in Chapter 91 WI Stats. and ATCP 49 WI Admin. Code. Due to the 2013 Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan only being 11 years old at the time of this Plan update (as opposed to that plan's predecessor being 31 years old), this updated Plan incorporates significant portions of the 2013 Plan. Many of the foundational aspects of the 2013 Plan remain substantially unchanged and relevant in 2024, as there has not been widespread changes in demographics, landuse, and the agricultural industry in the past 11 years in Marathon County. However, the design of this updated Plan varies from that of the 2013 Plan, with the intent being a more easily readable Plan document.

The planning process was overseen by the Marathon County Environmental Resources Committee, with input from Town Board Officials, landowners, and citizens in Marathon County. The update process included reviewing and updating demographic and agriculture statistical data and information, reaffirming and refining Marathon County's farmland preservation goals and objectives, reviewing and revising planned Farmland Preservation Area criteria, redrafting the Farmland Preservation Plan document text, and revising the Farmland Preservation Area maps. The maps were drafted by CPZ staff, and then reviewed, modified, and finalized in consultation with Town Board Officials and interested residents.

Public Input Opportunities

The Marathon County Environmental Resources Committee approved the *Public Participation Plan for the 2024 Farmland Preservation Plan* (attached as Appendix A), which formed the framework for interactive dialogue between CPZ staff, Town Board Officials, key stakeholders, landowners, and citizens of Marathon County during the Farmland Preservation Plan update process. In accordance with the public participation plan, the public participation process included several levels of internal and external input in order to achieve specific outcomes and objectives in terms of promoting public awareness, education, input, interaction, and partnership, that Marathon County sought to implement throughout the update of the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan.

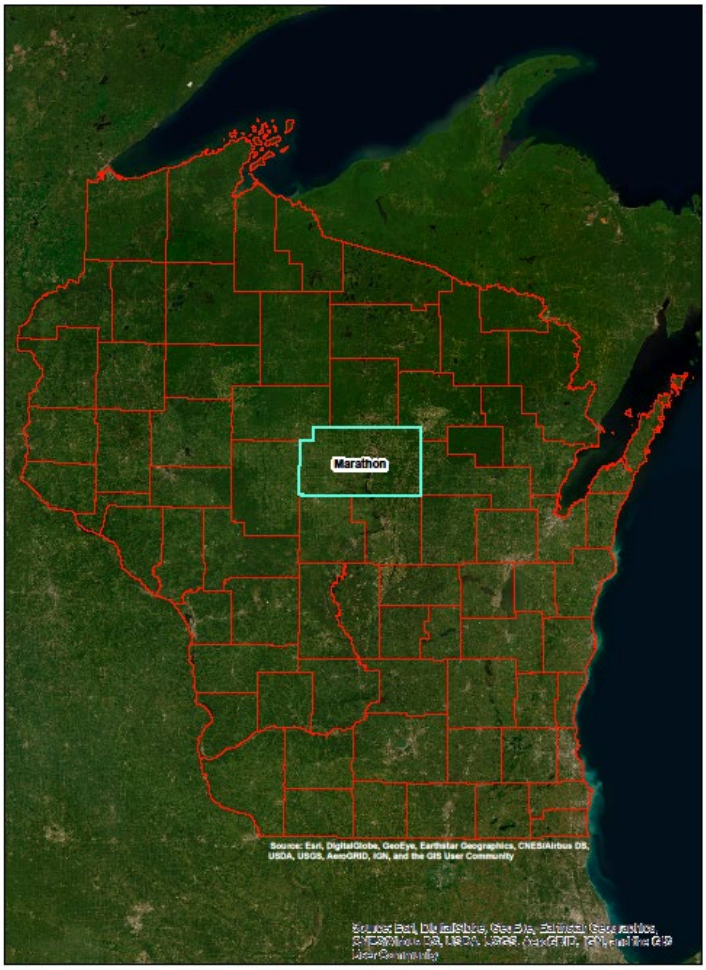
Farmland Preservation Plan Consistency

The Farmland Preservation Plan, although a stand-alone document, is consistent with, and a component of, the Marathon County Comprehensive Plan. The planning process for updating the Farmland Preservation Plan utilized information from the Marathon County Comprehensive Plan to ensure the documents are consistent. The integration of the Farmland Preservation Plan and the Comprehensive Plan is evident in several chapters of the Comprehensive Plan,

but most prominent in four chapters – Chapter 4: Community Character, Chapter 5: Natural Resources, Chapter 9: Land Use, and Chapter 10: Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development – especially in the goals and objectives of each of those chapters, and in the action steps for each of those goals and objections, as detailed in Chapter 8 (Farmland Preservation Plan Implementation) of the Farmland Preservation Plan.

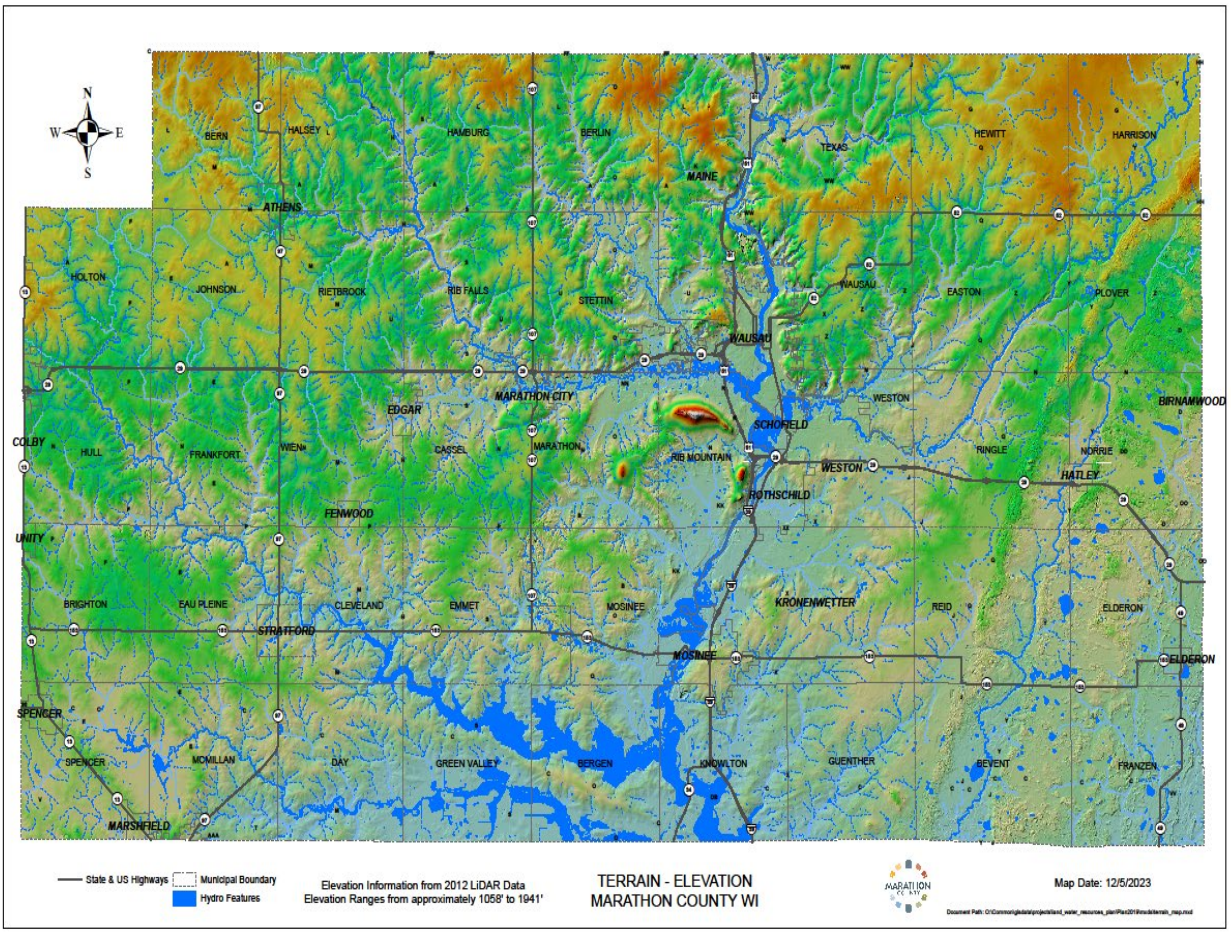
Chapter 3: BACKGROUND INFORMATION – EXISTING CONDITIONS

Marathon County, the largest county in the state, is in north central Wisconsin. Moving in a clockwise direction, the county is surrounded by Lincoln County to the north, Langlade County to the northeast, Shawano County to the east, Waupaca County to the southeast, Portage County to the southeast, Wood County to the southwest, Clark County to the west, and Taylor County to the northwest. (Map 3-1). Marathon County is approximately 30 miles long, 55 miles wide, and has an area of approximately 1,009,763 acres. The County has 39 towns, 16 villages, and 6 cities.



Map 3-1: Location of Marathon County, WI

Marathon County's landscape is primarily the result of glaciation. The far northern and western areas of the county are broad, nearly level to sloping ground moraines. The central area, except for the Wisconsin River Valley, is a mixed terrain of ground moraines and uplands underlain by bedrock at a depth of 2 to 20 feet. The Wisconsin River Valley is composed of nearly level to very steep outwash terraces and nearly level and gently sloping flood plains. The southeastern area of the county consists mainly of nearly level to steep outwash plains and stream terraces and undulating to very hilly moraines and drumlins. Map 3-2: Terrain – Elevation map illustrates the variation in elevation found within the County.

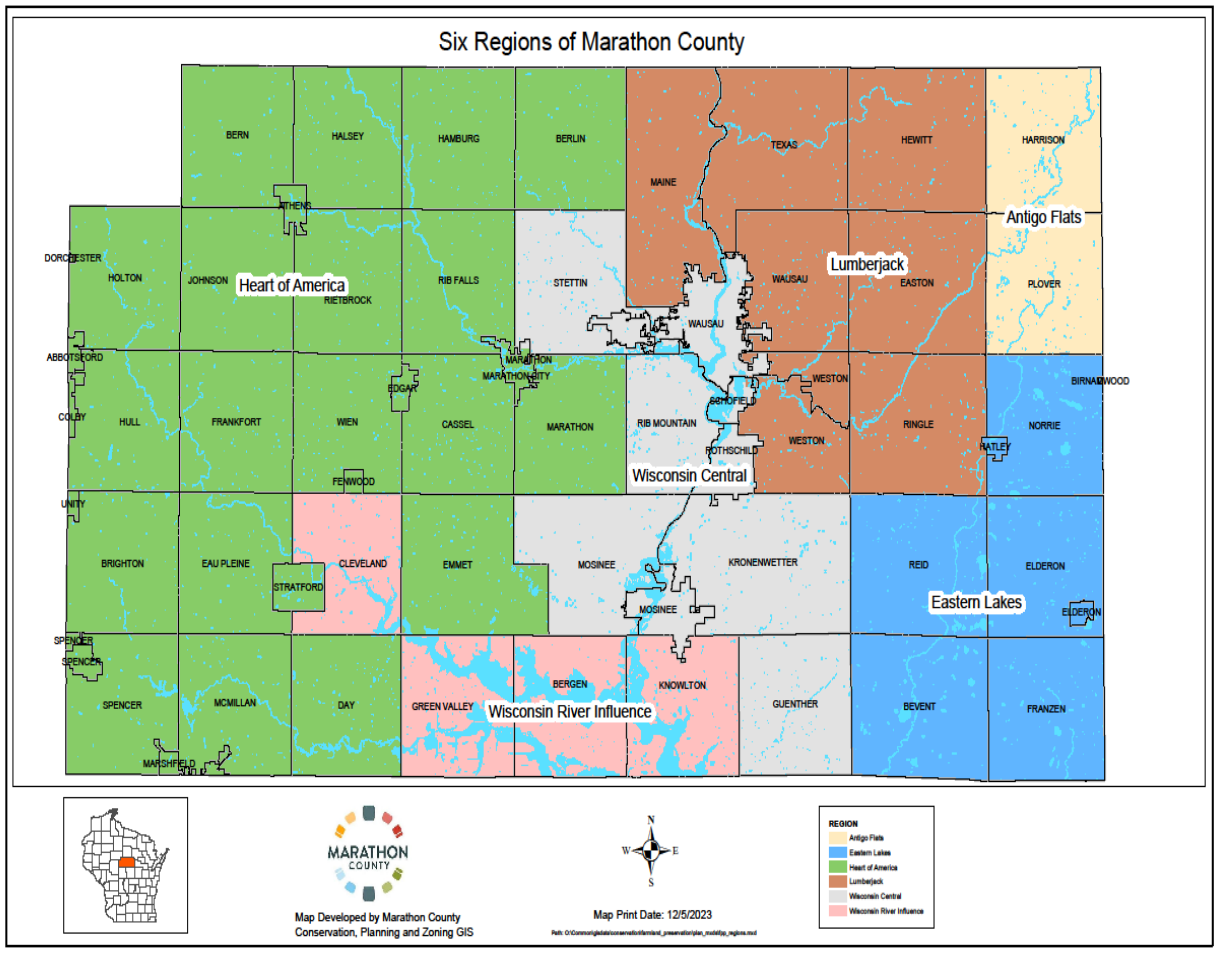


Map 3-2: Terrain – Elevation of Marathon County

Agriculture in Marathon County, like the rest of Wisconsin, has experienced significant changes over the past 40 years. There are numerous reasons for these shifts in agricultural activities and practices including changes in economics, population growth, societal changes, operational practices, support services, and state and national policies. The agricultural industry's reduction in the number of dairy farms, along with the increases in corn and soybean production are perhaps the most prominent of the changes. Even with the changes in the agricultural industry, Marathon County remains one of the top counties in the state in terms of sales of several agricultural commodities. Agriculture is very diverse among the Six Regions of Marathon County, which were identified during the development of the 2013 Farmland Preservation Plan and remain an integral part of this Plan.

Six Regions of Marathon County – Diversity of Land and People

Marathon County agriculture is diverse and extends over a large geographical area of over one million acres. During the development of the 2013 Farmland Preservation Plan and meeting with citizens, Marathon County planning staff recognized that a one size fits all strategy would not be effective nor would it best utilize limited resources available to serve the residents. Six unique regions in the county were identified, each varying in demographics, land use, soils, and patterns of agriculture, and having unique challenges and opportunities. The Six Regions of Marathon County are: Antigo Flats, Eastern Lakes, Heart of America's Dairyland, Lumberjack, Wisconsin Central, and Wisconsin River Influence. (See Map 3-3). A short summary of the regions follows. (See the *Population and Housing Trends* section of the chapter for more details and demographical information for these six regions.)



Map 3-3: Six Regions of Marathon County

Antigo Flats

Agricultural vision: The Antigo Flats region will be a nationally and internationally recognized leader in seed potato production.

The Antigo Flats region includes the towns of Harrison and Plover. The area is characterized by large tracts of publicly owned land and outdoor recreation areas (Bitzke Bird Walk, Dells of the Eau Claire, Ice Age Trail, and Plover River state fishery). Private lands are mixed agriculture and forest lands with scattered large lot residential development.



The agriculture industry in the Antigo Flats region is primarily seed potato and vegetable crops. Farms are generational and there are several Century Farms in the region. Five-point seven percent (5.7%) of the residents in the region identify themselves as working in the agricultural and agricultural-related industry, second highest only to Heart of America. Antigo Flats has the second smallest growth in population (1.7%). However, housing growth significantly exceeds population growth and is the highest in the County, at 13.6%.

County-wide housing growth is 5.8%. Current housing density is the lowest in the county (average of 7.4 homes/square mile). The actual housing density is even lower in parts of this region given the large publicly-owned land base. Residents in the region primarily go to school, work, socialize, and purchase many of their goods and services from the City of Antigo, in Langlade County. Residents may not feel connected with their county of residence.

Likewise, the area is challenged with a lack of connection with Marathon County government due to its close proximity to the City of Antigo and Langlade County. This can lead to both perceived and actual lack of services from Marathon County government.

Eastern Lakes

Agricultural vision: The Eastern Lakes region will support food production through the protection of the agricultural resource base by best management practices, protection of water resources, and maintaining infrastructure capable of supporting the needs of the agricultural industry.

The Eastern Lakes region includes the Towns of Norrie, Elderon, Franzen, Reid, and Bevent; and the Villages of Hatley and Elderon. The area was glaciated, resulting in a forested landscape with many kettle lakes. The area is characterized by smaller tracts of forested and agricultural lands. Many residences are seasonal lake homes and hunting cabins. Residential lot size is highly variable due to the mix of larger residential areas in agricultural areas, smaller residential areas in the forested areas, and smallest residential areas along lakeshores.

Source: U.S. Census, 2010 & 2020

The agriculture industry in the Eastern Lakes region is primarily irrigated vegetable crops such as sweet corn and potatoes, with a few dairy farms.



The Eastern Lakes region has a 3.5% population growth. Housing growth in the rural areas of this region is negative, at -2.4%, and rural area housing density is second lowest in the county (average of 10.8 homes/square mile).

Employment industry varies in the region; however, 7.9% of the residents identified agricultural and agricultural-related industry as their occupation. The region does not have any city or large village for goods and services, therefore residents in the region go to school, work, socialize, and purchase many of their goods and services from cities and villages outside the region such as Stevens Point and Rosholt in Portage County, Wausau in Marathon County, and Birnamwood and Wittenberg in Shawano County. Because of the scattered service centers, various school districts, and the prevalence of seasonal homes, there is not as strong of a sense of community as in other regions in the county.

The region is challenged with a lower residency rate than other areas of the county due to seasonal lake homes and hunting cottages. This often results in less connection with community and a lower degree of community involvement/planning than in areas with high residency rates.

Heart of America's Dairyland

Agricultural vision: Heart of America's Dairyland will be a leading dairy producing region in the state which supports family farms. Agricultural best management practices will be environmentally sound and sustainable to protect farmland and natural resources. Urban and rural interests will be balanced and coordinated to ensure efficient delivery of services and maximum protection of the farmland resource.



The Heart of America's Dairyland region is named after the *Heart of America's Dairyland Agricultural Enterprise Area* in western Marathon and eastern Clark counties. This region is the largest in the County and includes the towns of Bern, Halsey, Hamburg, Berlin, Holton, Johnson, Rietbrock, Rib Falls, Hull, Frankfort, Wien, Cassel, Marathon, Brighton, Eau Pleine, Emmet, Spencer, McMillan, and Day; the villages of Dorchester, Unity, Spencer, Stratford, Fenwood, Edgar, Marathon City, and Athens; and the cities of Abbotsford, Colby, and the Marathon County portion of the City of Marshfield. Pre-settlement, the area was dominated by wetlands, which were drained to make way for agriculture. The region is characterized by a flat to gently rolling landscape, with large tracts of contiguous farmland, and forest in the wetter areas and along streams.

The agricultural industry is mostly dairy, associated crops, and agribusinesses that provide agricultural services and products. Eleven point four percent (11.4%) of the residents identify themselves as working in the agricultural and agricultural-related industry, the highest in the county. Population growth is the lowest in the county, at 1.2%. However, housing growth in the rural areas of the Heart of America's Dairyland region is second highest in the county, at 10.3%. Residents in the area have a strong sense of community. Residents primarily live, work, attend school, socialize, and purchase many of their goods and services in the small villages and cities in the region.

The area is challenged with balancing the protection of the transportation infrastructure with the needs of the agriculture industry, conflicts in the urban and rural transitional areas around villages and cities, limited groundwater quantity, and agricultural runoff. The State Highway 29 corridor conversion to limited access poses additional challenges to farmers who farm on both sides of the highway.

Lumberjack

Agricultural vision: The Lumberjack region will continue to be a producer of forest products and outdoor recreational activities. The region will be a balanced mix of residential and agricultural land uses with a diverse population.



The Lumberjack region includes the towns of Texas, Hewitt, Easton, Wausau, Weston, Ringle, and the villages of Maine and Weston. The area is characterized by large tracts of forested lands with scattered smaller agricultural tracts, mixed with large lot residential development.

The agriculture industry in the Lumberjack region is primarily smaller scale grain, beef, and "lifestyle farms", with a few larger dairy farms. Lifestyle farming is characterized by family operations of small agri-tourism and activity farming such as corn mazes, pumpkin patches, and hayrides, etc.

Only 3.1% of the residents in the region identify as working in the agricultural industry, second lowest only to the Wisconsin Central region. Population growth in the Lumberjack region is the highest in the County at 5.4%, but housing growth in the rural areas of this region is slightly negative at -3.8%. This is offset by 6.5% housing growth in the Village of Weston. It is thought that the population growth is partly due to the relocation of Wausau East High School and the newer elementary schools in the region. Housing density in the rural areas of this region is the second highest in the county at 16.9 homes/square mile). Residents in the area primarily work, socialize, and purchase many of their goods and services in the Wisconsin Central region. The area is challenged with loss of agricultural land to new, large-lot residential development and balancing the demand for high level, cost effective public services with available resources.

Wisconsin Central

Agricultural vision: Wisconsin Central will have a strong agricultural economy through technological advances and a community that is supportive of local agriculture. Policies and programs will promote and be supportive of locally produced goods and services.



The Wisconsin Central region includes the cities of Wausau, Schofield, and Mosinee; the villages of Rothschild, Kronenwetter, and Rib Mountain; and the towns of Stettin, Mosinee, and Guenther. The area is the urban center of the county and serves as the employment, higher education, goods and services provider, and social recreation center of the county. Agricultural lands in the Wisconsin Central region are historically under the most non-agricultural development pressure in the County due to the availability of urban amenities.

The agriculture industry in the Wisconsin Central region includes greenhouses, grain, ginseng, dairy, and agribusinesses that provide agricultural services and products. Wisconsin Central serves as a regional marketplace for producers to sell goods at farmers markets and local businesses.

Only 1.6% of the residents identify as working in the agricultural and agricultural-related industry. Population growth is higher than county-wide, at 3.2% compared to 2.4%. Housing growth in the rural areas of this region is relatively low at 2.6%; however, existing housing density in the rural areas is the highest in the County at 18.2 homes/square mile. Residents in the area primarily live, work, attend school, socialize, and purchase many of their goods and services within the region.

The area is challenged with the transition of the rural fringe areas, as evidenced by the former Town of Rib Mountain becoming the Village of Rib Mountain in 2023.

Wisconsin River Influence

Agricultural vision: The Wisconsin River Influence region will be a balanced residential and agricultural community. Agricultural policies and programs will support agriculture that is diverse in size, ownership, and commodity produced. Residential and agricultural land practices will protect the resources of the region, especially the water resources that contribute to the quality of life, economy, and character of the region.

The Wisconsin River Influence region includes the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, Lake DuBay, Wisconsin River, Mead Wildlife Area, and the surrounding area in the towns of Cleveland, Green Valley, Bergen, and Knowlton. The region is characterized by surface water features, forest, and farmland.

The agriculture industry is varied and includes berries, ginseng, Christmas trees, apple orchards, grain, dairy, and other livestock, and 6.1% of the region's residents identify as working in the agricultural and agricultural-related industry. Household income and equalized value per capita is higher in this region than any other region in the county. (This will be updated in the next Comprehensive Plan update.)

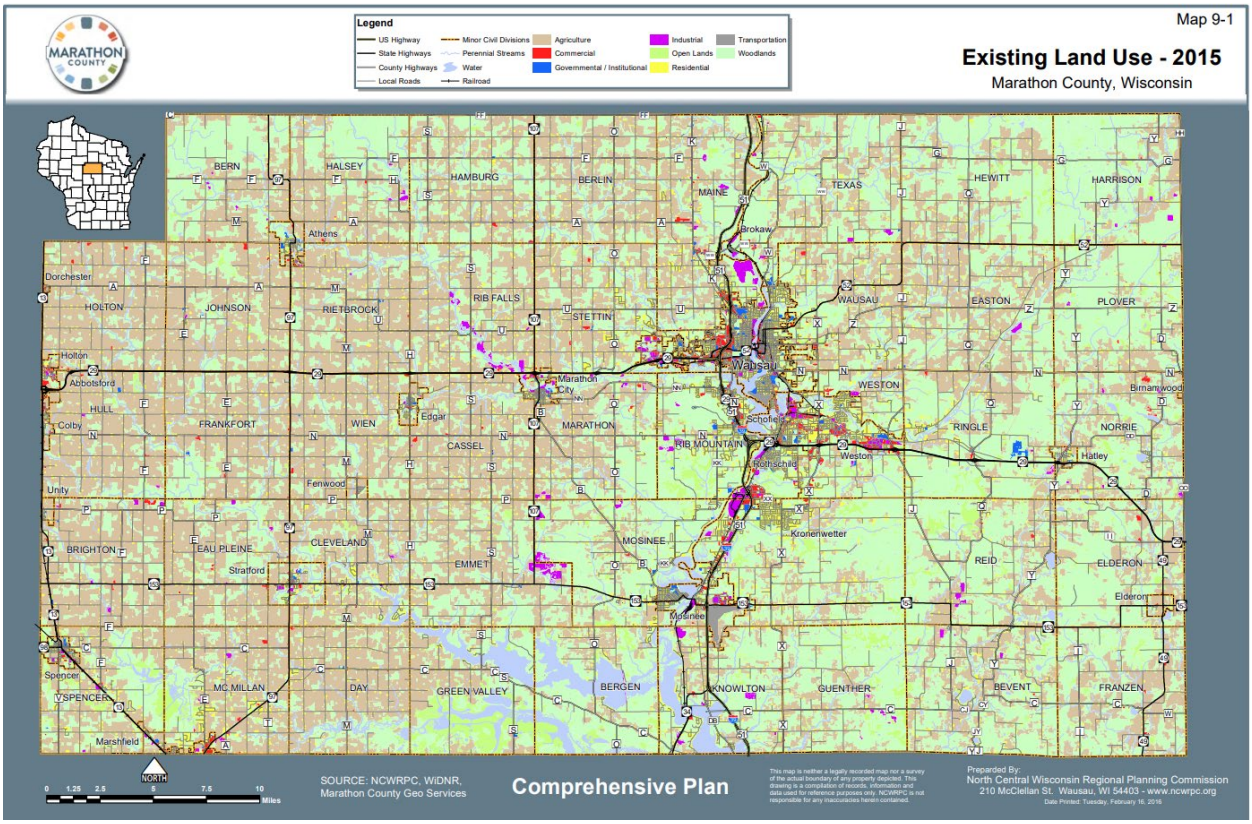


Population growth in this region has slowed, from 15% at the time of writing the previous Farmland Preservation Plan in 2013 to 1.9% currently. Similarly, housing growth has slowed from 24% to only 1%. While the average housing density is tied for the highest in the County (18.2 homes/square mile), homes are more clustered than other regions in the County. This is due to the large acreage in the region that is water. Residential lots tend to be smaller than county-wide, likely due to smaller water frontage lots decreasing the overall lot size in the region. Residents in this region primarily work and purchase goods and services outside the region, primarily in Stevens Point, Marshfield, and Wausau.

The area's biggest challenge is surface water quality issues.

Marathon County Existing Land Uses

A detailed land use analysis was completed as part of the planning effort for the 2016 Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, using existing County data, aerial photos, and other information. This information was then mapped (see Map 3-4) and various calculations were made (see Table 3-1) to arrive at the 2015 generalized land use of Marathon County. Agriculture is the dominant land use type in Marathon County, accounting for over 43 percent of the total land area. This is followed by woodlands with 38 percent. Overall, the amount of land developed with residential, commercial, or industrial land uses is relatively small, with a combined area of about six percent of the land area. Of the developed land use types, residential land uses account for the majority of acreage, but still only represent about 4.7 percent of the land area in the entire county. While the Wausau metropolitan area continues to expand, Marathon County remains predominantly rural in character.



Map 3-4: Generalized Land Use of Marathon County

Table 3-1: Existing Land Use (2015)		
	Acres	**Percent**
Agriculture	439,346	43.51%
Commercial	5,486	0.54%
Governmental/ Institutional	2,438	0.24%
Industrial	5,185	0.61%
Open Lands	57,312	5.68%
Outdoor Recreation	2,313	0.23%
Quary	13	0.00%
Residential	47,604	4.71%
Transportation	33,016	3.27%
Woodlands	387,718	38.40%
Water	28,331	2.81%
Total Acres	1,009,763	100.00%

Source: Marathon County Land Cover, NCWRPC Modified 2015

Natural Resources

Natural resources, especially water and soil, are critical to the future of Marathon County. Marathon County has identified natural resource management and protection as a priority because the economic strength and vitality of our community is dependent on the quality of these natural resources. These resources are highly valued for their natural beauty, wildlife habitat, the recreational opportunities they provide (see Table 3-2), as well as their important contribution to the economy – especially the agricultural industry - of Marathon County.

Table 3-2: Marathon County Parks, Facilities, and Forest Units			
Name of Park/Facility/Forest Unit	**Location**	**Acreage**	**Key Features**
Amco Park	125773 County Rd L, Athens	39	Fishing, Picnic, Play Equipment, Shelter
Ashley Park	153728 Sandy Creek Road, Mosinee	160	Fishing, Trail, Plants/Wildlife
Big Eau Pleine Park	135695 Eau Pleine Park Rd, Mosinee	1,453	Beach, Boat Landings, Camping, Trails, Disc Golf, Fishing, Hiking, Biking, Snowbiking, Horse Trails
Big Rapids Park	217116 Cruze Lane, Stratford	33	Fishing, Picnic, Play Equipment, Shelter
Bluegill Bay Park	226300 Bluegill Ave, Wausau	98	Boat Landing, Fishing, Picnic, Shelters, Trails, Volleyball Court
Cherokee Park	108042 County Rd N, Colby	69	Fishing, Picnic, Play Equipment, Shelter, Swimming, Trails
Courthouse Square	500 Forest St, Wausau	0.4	Open Area, Plants/Wildlife

Table 3-2: Marathon County Parks, Facilities, and Forest Units Continued			
Name of Park/Facility/Forest Unit	**Location**	**Acreage**	**Key Features**
D.C. Everest Park	1800 S 3rd Ave, Wausau	12.1	Boat Landing, Handicapped Accessible Fishing Pier, Waterski Show Site
Dells of the Eau Claire Park	235890 County Rd Y, Aniwa	278	Beach, Camping, Picnic, Swimming, Trails, Shelter, Ice Age National Recreation Trail
Duane L. Corbin Shooting Range Park	217980 Rifle Rd, Mosinee	100	Shelter; Rifle, Pistol, Skeet, and Archery Ranges; Classroom
Marathon County Sports Complex	602 E Kent St, Wausau	66.6	Field Sports Facility, Concessions, Play Equipment
Marathon Park	1201 Stewart Ave, Wausau	78	Fairgrounds, Amphitheater, Ice Areana, Large Shelters, Playgrounds, Concession, Minature Train Ride, Baseball, Basketball, Camping, Pickleball, Trails, Volleyball, Splash Pad
Mission Lake Park	211017 County Park Rd, Hatley	93	Beach, Boat Landing, Swimming, Trails, Shelters
Mountain-Bay State Trail Park (Trail Head)	5501 Municipal St, Weston	NA	Picnic, Bicycle, Hiking, and Snowmobile Trail
45N - 90W Geographic Marker	234801 Meridian Rd, Athens	0.1	Geographic Marker
Rib Falls Park	232232 County Rd S, Edgar	315	Fishing, Picnic, Play Equipment, Trails
Sunny Vale Park	1000 S 72nd Ave, Wausau	300	Picnic, Swimming, Handicapped Accessible Fishing Pier, Snowbike Trail, Trails, Volleyball
Sunny Vale Softball Complex	1000 S 66th Ave, Wausau	72	Softball, Concessions, Volleyball, Picnic, Shelter
Bern Wetland Forest Unit	Frahm Rd, Athens (Town of Bern)	269	Hunting, Open Area, Trails
Burma Road Forest Unit	139645 Burma Rd, Mosinee (Town of Mosinee)	1,480	Hunting, Trails, ATV Trail
Elderon Forest Unit	213801 Hightower Dr, Eland (Town of Elderon)	280	Hunting, Open Area, Trails
Hewitt-Harrison Forest Unit	245361 County Forest 105 Rd, Wausau (Towns of Hewitt & Harrison)	9873	Hunting, Open Area, Trails, Wildlife Refuge

Table 3-2: Marathon County Parks, Facilities, and Forest Units Continued			
Name of Park/Facility/Forest Unit	**Location**	**Acreage**	**Key Features**
Kronenwetter Forest Unit	4325 Martin Rd, Kronenwetter (Village of Kronenwetter)	5,176	Hunting, Open Area, Trails,. Horse Trails
Leather Camp Forest Unit	4445 E State Hwy 153, Mosinee (Town of Guenther)	5,248	Hunting, Open Area, Fishing,Trails, Horse Trails
Miller Forest Unit	River Edge Rd, Wausau (Town of Easton)	80	Fishing, Open Area
Nine Mile Forest Recreation Area	221700 Red Bud Rd, Wausau (Village of Rib Mountain)	4,897	Hunting; Cross Country Ski, Snowshoe, Snowmobile, Horse, and Mountain Bike Trails, Chalet
Ringle Forest Unit	Timber Ridge Ln, Schofield (Towns of Ringle & Reid)	3,108	Hunting, Trails
Wisconsin River Forest Unit	Pine Bluff Rd, Wausau (Village of Maine)	303	Hunting, Boating, Fishing, Trails

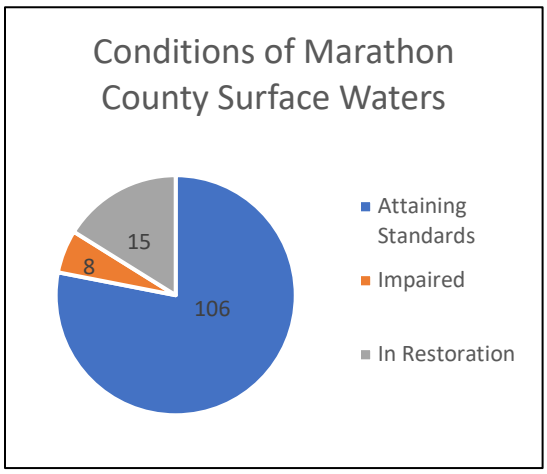
Source: Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department

Surface Waters

Marathon County has 60 lakes of 10 acres or more in size, with a total surface area of 18,592 acres. The Big Eau Pleine Reservoir is the largest body of water with a potential area of 6,830 acres when full. Many lakes lie in the kettle holes left by the retreat of the glaciers. Seepage lakes are the most common type of lake in the County. These lakes do not have any surface water outflow but depend on underground movement of water through highly permeable glacial soils for drainage. Most lakes are quite shallow, with depths ranging from less than one foot to a maximum of 34 feet. The largest "lakes" in the County have been formed behind river dams, including the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, Lake Wausau, Half Moon Lake, and Lake Du Bay. Like other water resources, lakes provide flood retention, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic amenities.



The County has 94 named rivers and streams with a total length of 1,049 miles. The interconnected network of rivers and streams that cross Marathon County is characteristic of a landscape influenced by glacial impacts. The Wisconsin River flows south through the middle of the County. The river is regulated by several dams on the mainstem and tributaries, which are controlled by the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation. Major tributaries flowing from east to west include the Trappe, Eau Claire, Little Eau Claire, and Plover Rivers. The major tributaries flowing from west to east are the Little Rib, Big Rib, Big Eau Pleine, and the Little Eau Pleine Rivers.



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has compiled a list of Rivers, Streams, and Lakes that are contained within Marathon County or navigate through the county. Not every surface water system has been sampled and analyzed by the DNR or county staff due to a limited workforce and time constraints. These surface water systems are placed into three categories: Impaired, In Restoration, and Attaining Standards. As of 2023, Marathon County has 8 surface water systems listed as impaired, 15 listed as in restoration, and 106 listed as attaining standards. Marathon County has one newly listed impaired water system.

The complex interaction of surface water and nonpoint source pollution is a result of activities that take place on the land surface and the water dynamics that occur as a result, e.g., how water runs off the land surface or is absorbed into the ground. Consequently, all land activities have the potential to contribute to nonpoint source pollution problems. Several surface waters in Marathon County have been identified as "impaired waters" on the "303(d) list" of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The list identifies waters that do not meet current water quality standards and merit water quality improvement and protection. Agriculture, and to a lesser extent residential and urban activities, are the primary sources of nonpoint source pollution to the surface waters in the County. Sources of agricultural pollution include nutrient, sediment, and livestock manure runoff from cropland, manure runoff from outdoor livestock lots, and manure runoff from improperly stacked/stored animal waste.



Most wetland areas in the County are wooded. The Mead Wildlife Area (33,000 acres) and the McMillan Wildlife Area (5,700 acres) are the most extensive wetland and grassland regions located in the County. The flowages in these areas were developed to create waterfowl nesting sites and feeding areas for migratory waterfowl. From the late 1940's through the 1970's, many smaller natural wetland areas in the west half of the County were drained for cropland through construction of double, parallel, "W"-shaped surface ditch systems. (See Figure 3-1). These long, narrow drainage channels improved crop production, but also greatly increased runoff volumes and rates and the flashy nature of the rivers and streams. The majority of these drainage ditches still function in agricultural areas.



Figure 3-1: "W" Ditch Drainage System

Groundwater

Groundwater is the major source of all water consumption in Marathon County. Access to groundwater varies across the County, as does the amount of water available. Well depths of 50 feet or more to reach groundwater are common in areas with bedrock close to the ground surface. Aquifers that yield small amounts of water to wells are associated with fractured crystalline bedrock formations at or near the ground surface in the central and eastern parts of the County, sandstone overlaying crystalline bedrock in the southern and western parts, and glacial till that covers the area north and west of the Marshfield moraine. Many wells in crystalline rock yield less than two gallons per minute. About 90 percent of wells in sandstone and most wells in glacial till yield 5-20 gallons per minute. Well water supplies are generally good in the Wisconsin River Valley. Groundwater is the primary source of irrigation water where vegetable crops are grown in the southeastern area of the County.

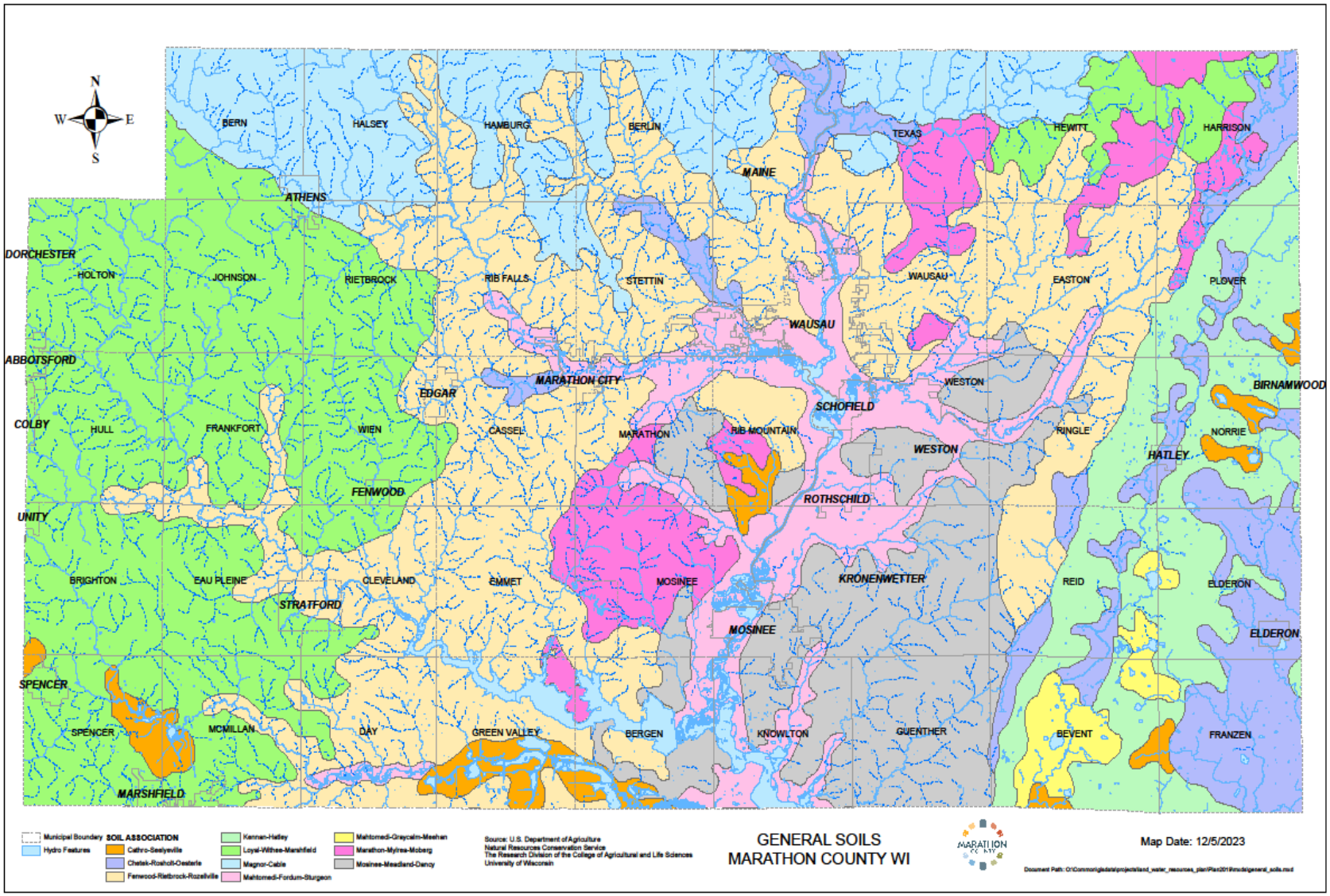
The need for clean groundwater is both a health and economic issue. When groundwater becomes polluted, property values drop and a natural resource is diminished from its full potential. As residential development continues to expand into rural areas of the County, and agricultural production methods intensify, the concern for groundwater protection grows. Increased nitrate and bacteria levels in drinking water wells pose serious health concerns, as do other pollutants such as atrazine. Sources of these pollutants include infiltration from land applications of manure, fertilizer, and herbicides to agricultural land, improper manure storage, livestock lots, failing septic systems, and abandoned and improperly closed wells.

Soils

Most of the soils found in the County are best used for cropland and woodlands. The soils of Marathon County are primarily derived from the weathering of glacial drift, glacial outwash, and bedrock; however, a few soils formed in glaciolacustrine deposits, alluvial deposits, or organic material. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted and published a Soil Survey, which describes the kinds of soils that exist in an area. Soils are described in terms of their location on the landscape, profile characteristics, relationship to one another, suitability for various uses, and needs for particular types of management. The Soil Survey identifies 10 primary soil associations (see Map 3-5) in Marathon County. See the survey online for more detailed and up-to-date information.

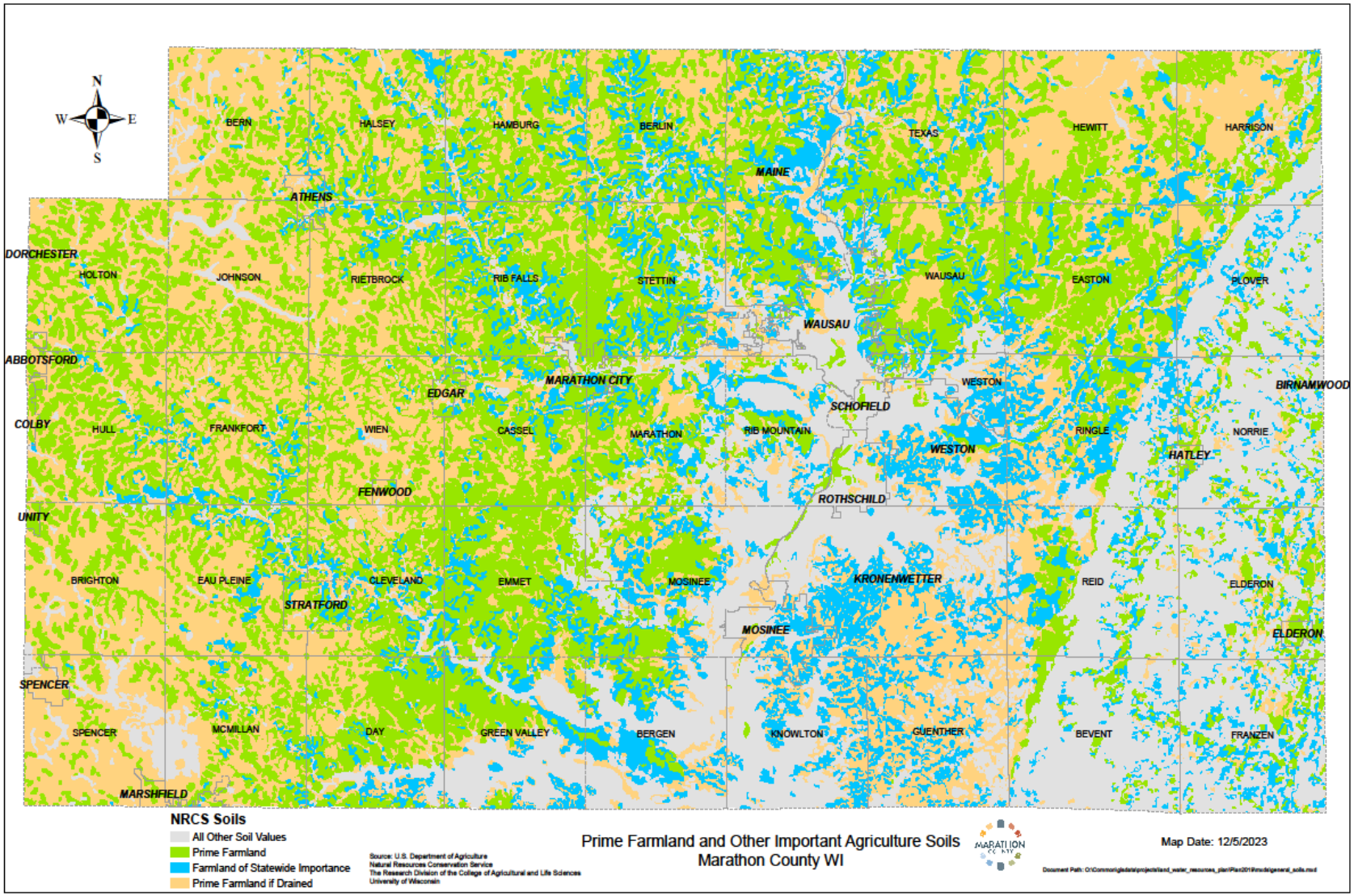


Soils play a significant role in determining the suitability of a site for a particular use. Most soils in Marathon County are suitable for agriculture, except those with excess slopes or areas that are poorly drained. Areas most suitable for agricultural production, with minimal limitations and requiring minimal inputs for successful production, have been identified as "prime farmlands" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (see Map 3-6). Not all lands classified as prime farmland are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other uses. The western half of the County is home to most of the prime farmland. However, several areas of prime farmland are found east of the Wisconsin River, particularly northeast of the City of Wausau and along the Eau Claire and Plover Rivers.



Map 3-5: General Soil Associations of Marathon County

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Map 3-6: Prime Farmland and Other Important Agricultural Soils of Marathon County

Population and Housing Trends

Marathon County's population has increased by 2.4% between 2010 and 2020, from 134,063 to 137,237. During the same period, housing units increased by 5.8%. This trend shows an increase in housing that exceeds population growth. This is due to smaller household size and a prevalence of new home construction. As the population ages, more households are becoming "empty nesters". This, in combination with smaller families, contributes to the decreased household size. This trend poses several challenges including, 1) Land converted for housing accommodates a smaller portion of the population growth. Therefore, land conversion to residential use increases at a faster rate than population growth. 2) The cost of provision of public utilities and services per capita increases due to population distribution.

However, the gap between housing growth and population growth (with housing exceeding population) that was prevalent at the time of the previous (2013) Farmland Preservation Plan, has decreased significantly in many rural areas of the County. While the gap still remains in the rural Antigo Flats region and the rural areas of the Heart of America's Dairyland region, the rural areas of the Eastern Lakes and Lumberjack regions are now experiencing slightly negative housing growth. Figure 3-2 shows population change in the rural areas of the six regions of Marathon County, and Figure 3-3 shows housing change in the rural areas of the six regions. See Figure 3-4 for household density in rural areas, by region of the County.

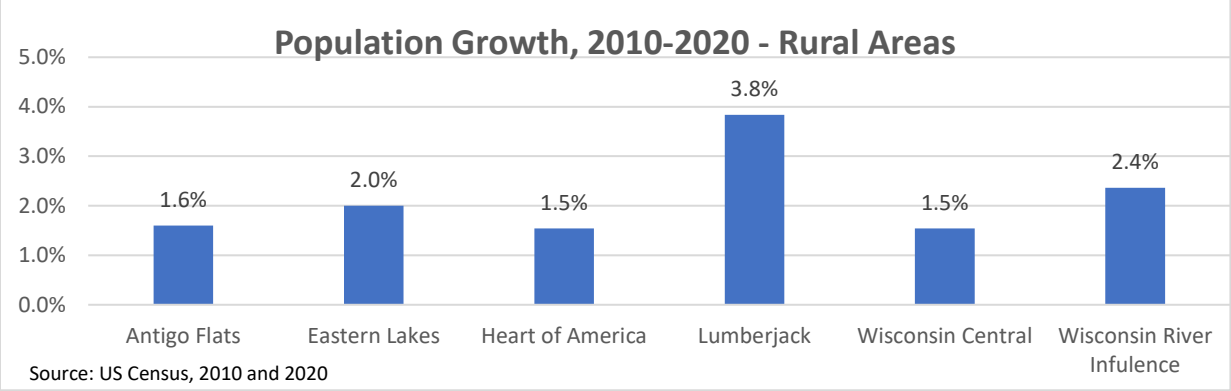


Figure 3-2: Population Change by Region

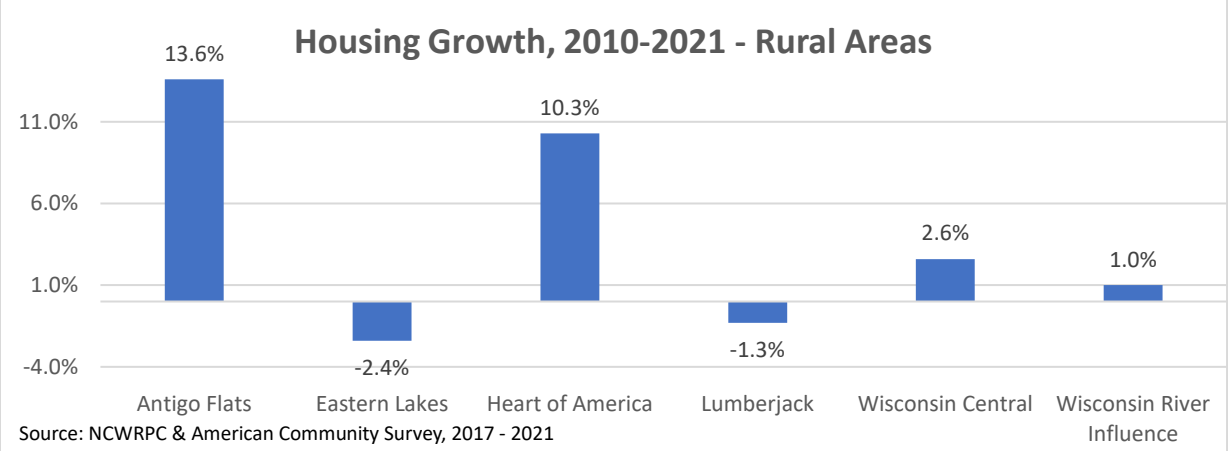


Figure 3-3: Housing Change by Region

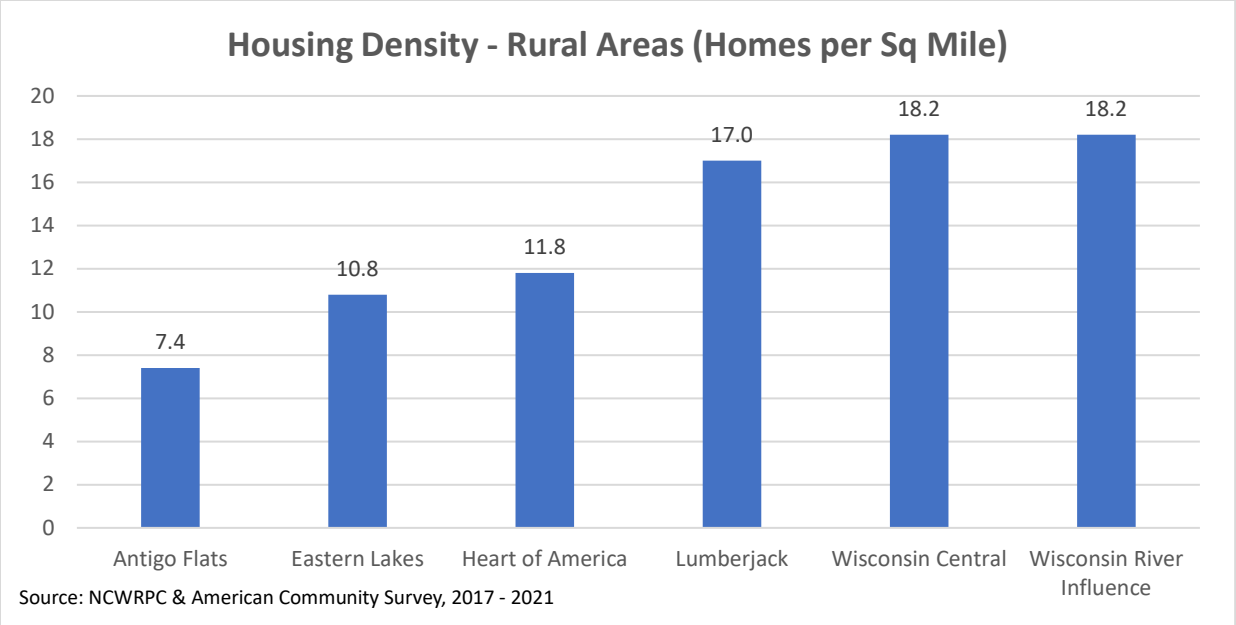


Figure 3-4: Housing Density by Region

Transportation

Public Roads

With the major highways of State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 51/Interstate 39, Marathon County is fully served by major transportation arteries. There are 3,387 miles of public roads in the County. 3,104 miles are under the jurisdiction of the County and Towns. The County and Town roads make up the primary transportation network for agriculture throughout the County. The County recognizes the importance of maintaining the public road infrastructure into the future. With the trend of production and processing consolidation in agriculture, the equipment used to transport manure, milk, commodities, and feed materials has increased in both size and weight. These increases are a trend that challenges the adequacy of Marathon County's transportation infrastructure relative to safety, maintenance activities and schedules, and structural upgrades.

Railroads

Freight rail is efficient and cost effective for long distance freight shipping, particularly for bulk commodities. Active rail in Marathon County includes:

- Urban:
  - Along the Wisconsin River and U.S. Highway 51/Interstate 39 corridor.
  - Parallel to State Highway 29 west of U.S. Highway 51/Interstate 39.
  - East of the Village of Weston running parallel to County Road JJ.
- Rural:
  - Southwestern Marathon County connecting Marshfield and Spencer to Superior in northwest Wisconsin and Milwaukee in southeast Wisconsin.
  - Spencer north through Unity, Colby, and Abbotsford, and terminating in Medford.

Across northern Wisconsin, freight rail service has been in steady decline. Marathon County has joined with many neighboring Counties to join the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission in 2012. The intent of the commission is to improve local rail services in northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan to spur economic activities.

Infrastructure, Utilities, and Community Services and Facilities

Adequate infrastructure, utilities, and community services and facilities are essential to support all forms of growth throughout the County.

Water Supply

Marathon County utilizes nearly 22 billion gallons of water per year for residential, industrial, and agricultural uses. That equates to 60.3 million gallons/day. The cities and villages are served by public water supply systems as shown in Table 3-3.

Private wells, supplied by groundwater, are the major source of water supply in Marathon County. The DNR database has almost 28,000 unique well numbers registered in Marathon County. The condition of County groundwater has implications for agriculture, recreation, businesses, private and municipal well owners, homeowners, and many others. All these groups have a stake in protecting the health and economic prosperity of Marathon County residents, businesses, and visitors. As part of the County's effort to protect and appropriately manage this vital resource, Marathon County is in the process of updating its Groundwater Plan. This update involves assessing groundwater quality and quantity within the county to better understand the current condition of our water, identify any potential concerns, and provide data-informed guidance on strategies and policies that may be pursued to manage our groundwater into the future.

Table 3-3: Public Water Supply Systems

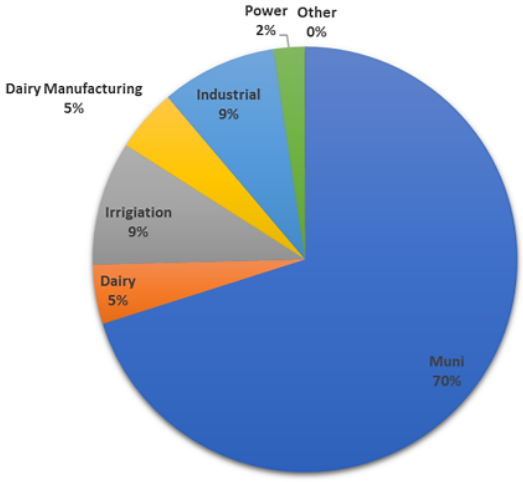
Name of Facility	Location
City of Wausau	Wausau
City of Abbotsford	Abbotsford
Village of Stratford	Stratford
Village of Marathon City	Marathon
Village of Athens	Athens
City of Schofield	Schofield
Village of Maine	Maine
Village of Weston	Weston
Village of Kronenwetter	Kronenwetter
City of Colby	Colby
Village of Spencer	Spencer
Rib Mountain Sanitary District	Rib Mountain
Village of Rothschild	Rothschild
City of Mosinee	Mosinee
Village of Elderon	Elderon
Village of Schofield	Schofield
City of Marshfield	Marshfield
Village of Edgar	Edgar



Per Wisconsin statute, a high capacity well means a well, that, together with all other wells on the same property, has a capacity of more than 100,000 gallons per day. This definition does not cover wells on a property that are for residential or fire protection purposes. Access to adequate water is vital to farm operations and expansion. High-capacity withdrawal of water has impacts to surrounding land-use and community development. The state requires a landowner receive approval from DNR prior to constructing and operating new high-capacity wells.

Marathon County data, provided by the DNR in 2021, identified 257 active high-capacity wells drawing from the groundwater and another 40 high-capacity wells drawing from surface water. Of the 257 groundwater wells, almost 60 percent are related to agricultural functions. Similar, of the 40 surface water wells, 70 percent support agricultural functions. When looking at the annual volume of water withdrawn from groundwater high-capacity wells, 14 percent of the 5.3 billion gallons is related to agricultural uses. When looking at the annual volume of water withdrawn from surface water high-capacity wells, 1 percent of the 16.3 billion gallons is related to agricultural uses (See Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6). Map 3-7 illustrates the locations of existing municipal public water supply wells and high-capacity wells in Marathon County.

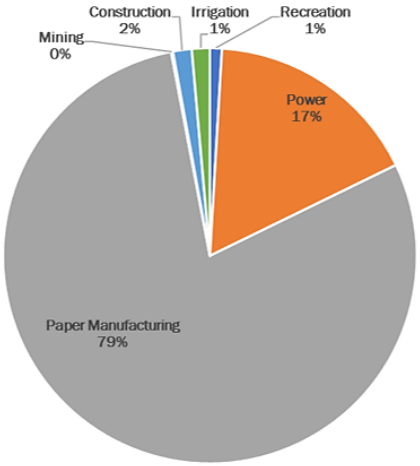
Marathon County– Groundwater Volume Withdrawn (2021)



5.7 Billions Gallons of Groundwater Withdrawn

Figure 3-5 Annual Groundwater Volume Withdrawn

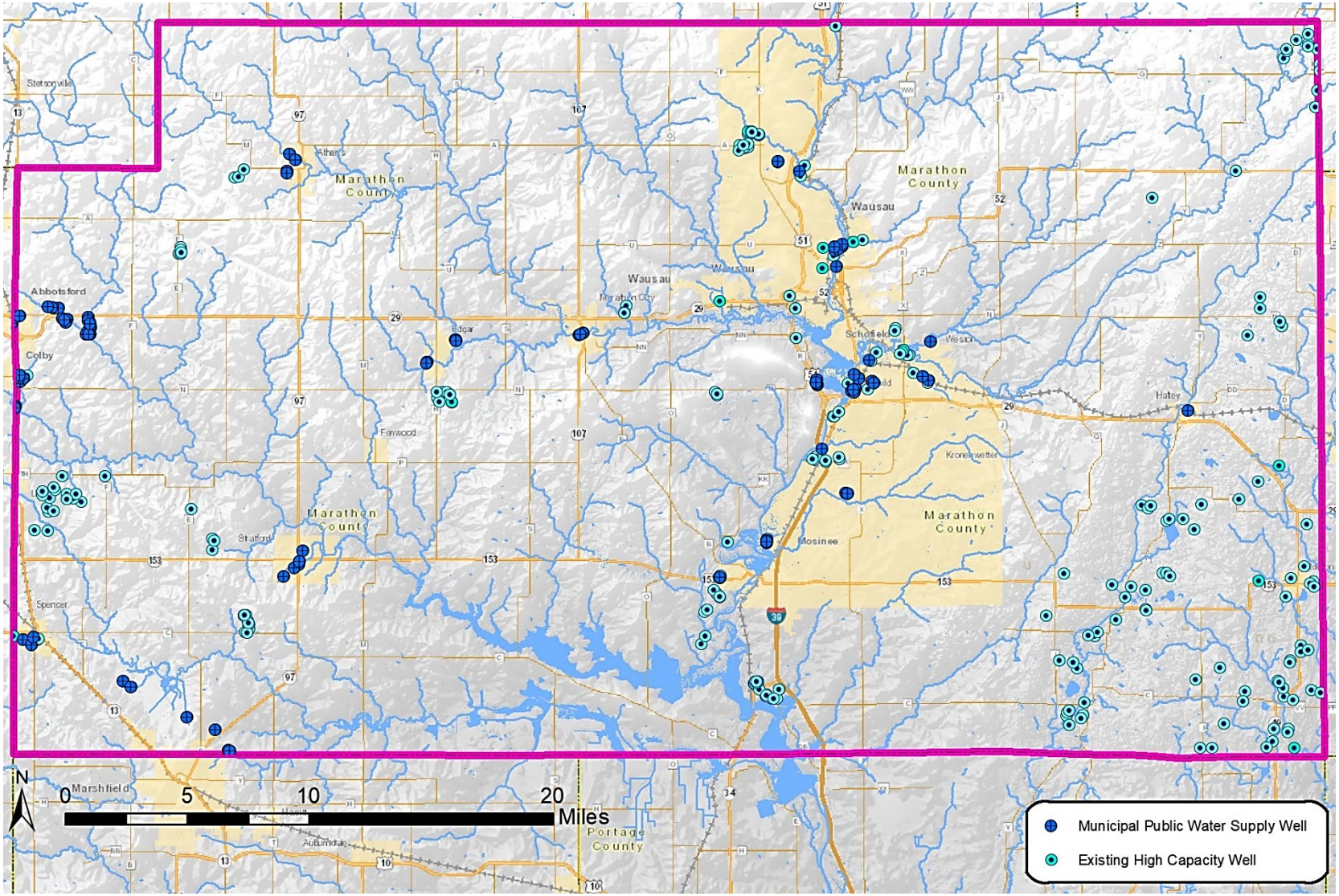
Marathon County– Surface Water Volume Withdrawn (2021)



16.3 Billions Gallons of Surface Water Withdrawn

Figure 3-6. Annual Surface Water Volume Withdrawn

(Both figures courtesy of the Wisconsin DNR)



Map 3-7: Locations of Municipal and High-Capacity Wells in Marathon County (Courtesy of the Wisconsin DNR)

Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater Treatment

The cities and majority of villages in Marathon County are served by wastewater treatment facilities as shown in Table 3-4. Additionally, parts of the Town of Johnson (Milan) and the Town of Day (Rozellville) provide wastewater treatment services.

The remainder of the County depends on Private Onsite Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS) for wastewater treatment. At present, Marathon County has 21,248 POWTS to manage wastewater treatment requirements of these communities. Over the past five years, whenever new development occurs or these systems fall out of compliance, the County has taken proactive measures, ensuring new systems are installed as needed. In the past five years (2018-2023), 1,789 new POWTS systems have been installed in Marathon County. In 2023 Marathon County worked with the County Board of Supervisors and partnered with MCDEVCO, Inc. to establish a low-interest loan program available to landowners who need to replace failing POWTS systems. The goal of the loan program is to reduce financial barriers associated with replacing failing systems and more quickly bring systems into compliance to protect county groundwater resources. There are also provisions in the program for businesses to qualify for a loan, including farms. This commitment to proper replacement and installation of POWTS is crucial for safeguarding water quality and mitigating the risk of diseases linked to sewage discharge.

Table 3-4: Wastewater Treatment Plants

Name of Facility	Location
Abbotsford Wastewater Treatment Plant	City of Abbotsford
Athens Water and Sewer	Village of Athens
Birnamwood Water and Sewer	Village of Birnamwood
Brokaw Water and Sewer (Village of Maine)	Brokaw (Village of Maine)
Colby Wastewater Treatment Facility	City of Colby
Edgar Wastewater Department	Village of Edgar
Fenwood Wastewater Treatment Facility	Village of Fenwood
Hatley Water and Sewer	Village of Hatley
Marathon City Water and Sewer	Village of Marathon City
Marshfield Wastewater Treatment Facility	City of Marshfield
Milan Sanitary District	Unincorporated Named Place of Milan
Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District	Rib Mountain, Weston, Rothschild, Kronenwetter, and Mosinee
Rozellville Sanitary District	Unincorporated Named Place of Rozellville
Spencer Water and Wastewater	Village of Spencer
Stratford Water and Wastewater	Village of Stratford
Unity Wastewater Treatment Facility	Village of Unity
Wausau Water Works	City of Wausau

Solid Waste Management

Most solid waste collection in Marathon County is by private service providers. In most communities, the municipality contracts with the provider for waste collection and charges residents for the service. Marathon County owns and operates a regional landfill in the Town of Ringle. Marathon County offers programs on composting, recycling, hazardous waste collection, and electronics recycling.

Energy

Economic growth requires labor, capital, and energy. Agriculture and agricultural business and industry need energy at a competitive cost to operate. Marathon County is fortunate to have multiple companies to provide electricity to county residents, businesses, and industries. Marathon County governmental units, businesses, and residents are working towards consistent, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy by following energy conservation principles that incorporate traditional energy sources, energy conservation programs, and renewable energy. Renewable energy in Marathon County includes the biomass plant in Weston that was completed in 2013, Wausau hydroelectric dam, Ringle landfill, and private wind and solar power generation. Large scale wind energy and solar energy projects have been proposed in the western portion of the county; however, the projects are still in the very early stages.

Telecommunications Facilities and Services

According to 2023 federal data, Marathon County has approximately 15,000 addresses that have no or very slow internet access. Many of these addresses are in the rural farming communities of Marathon County. Access to high-speed internet is very important to the agricultural sector of the county. It allows farmers to conduct the business management aspects of running a farm more efficiently. It can also open the door for farmers to consider modernizing operations, where the ability to analyze and monitor data in real time can help them make farm management decisions that will improve the quality and/or quantity of production.

Rural broadband presents a unique challenge, as the cost of running infrastructure to these locations can be high. However, Marathon County has been working to expand internet access since 2009. The goal is to ensure every address in Marathon County has access to reliable and affordable internet. Marathon County conducted a broadband study to identify needs and established the Broadband Task Force to facilitate broadband expansion in our county. The county is working with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Marathon County to identify areas of need and coordinate ISP efforts to seek federal and state funding to expand internet service to these areas. Over the last few years, Marathon County has applied, or assisted in the application, of numerous grants at the state and federal level and the county has entered into a conduit bonding agreement with a local ISP. That agreement will provide for dramatic expansion of broadband and cellular access throughout some of the most underserved areas of our community. Awards received from the Public Service Commission in 2022 alone will substantially enhance the service to more than 800 businesses and 10,000 residences in Marathon County over the next several years.

In 2024, Marathon County is working closely with ISPs and rural communities to access funding for approximately 9,000 un/underserved addresses through the Broadband Equity Access and

Deployment (BEAD) grant program, administered by the Public Service Commission. The goal for BEAD is to provide affordable fiber broadband services to all addresses in Marathon County by 2030.

Public Safety and Protection

The large geographical size of Marathon County means numerous law enforcement agencies and paid/fulltime, as well as volunteer, fire and rescue departments are needed to provide coverage for public safety services and fire protection and emergency services for county residents and visitors. See table 3-5 and 3-6 for a listing of these providers.

Table 3-5: Law Enforcement

Name of Facility	Location
Abbotsford Police Department	City of Abbotsford
Athens Police Department	Village of Athens
Colby Police Department	City of Colby
Edgar Police Department	Village of Edgar
Everest Metro Police Department	City of Schofield and Village and Town of Weston
Kronenwetter Police Department	Village of Kronenwetter
Marathon City Police Department	City of Marathon
Marathon County Sheriff's Office	County-Wide
Marshfield Police Department	City of Marshfield
Mosinee Police Department	City of Mosinee
Mountain Bay Metro	Village of Rothschild and Village of Weston
Spencer Police Department	Village of Spencer
Stratford Police Department	Village of Stratford
Wausau Police Department	City of Wausau

Table 3-6: Fire and Rescue	
Name of Facility	**Location**
Abbotsford Fire and EMS	City of Abbotsford
Athens Fire and EMS	Village of Athens
Auburndale Fire	Village of Auburndale
Birnamwood Fire and EMS	Village of Birnamwood
Colby Fire and EMS	City of Colby
Dorchester Fire and EMS	Village of Dorchester
Easton Fire	Town of Easton
Edgar Fire and EMS	Village of Edgar
Hamburg Fire	Town of Hamburg
Hatley Fire and EMS	Town of Hatley
Hewitt Fire	Town of Hewitt
Kronenwetter Fire	Village of Kronenwetter
Maine Fire	Town of Maine
Marathon Fire	City of Marathon
Marshfield Fire and EMS	City of Marshfield
McMillan Fire	Town of McMillan
Mosinee Fire and EMS	City of Mosinee
Ringle Fire	Town of Ringle
Riverside Fire	City of Schofield and Village of Rothschild
SAFER Fire and EMS	Village of Rib Mountain, Village and Town of Weston, Village of Kronenwetter and Towns of Easton, Ringle, Guenther, Stettin, and Marathon
Spencer Fire and EMS	Village of Spencer
Stratford Fire and EMS	Village of Stratford
Texas Fire	Town of Texas
Wausau Fire and EMS	City of Wausau
Wittenberg Fire and EMS	Village of Wittenberg

Healthcare

Healthcare services are provided throughout the County. There are two hospitals in Marathon County located in Wausau and Weston. There is also a hospital and a children's hospital in the Wood County portion of the City of Marshfield that serves Marathon County residents. Numerous clinics are located in Marathon County, and also one in the Wood County portion of the City of Marshfield, and two just outside of Marathon County in neighboring Shawano County. See Table 3-7.

Table 3-7: Health Care – Hospitals and Clinics

Name of Facility	Location
Aspirus Athens Clinic	Village of Athens
Aspirus Birnamwood Clinic	Village of Birnamwood
Aspirus Kronenwetter Clinic	Village of Kronenwetter
Aspirus Marathon Clinic	City of Marathon
Aspirus Wausau Hospital	City of Wausau
Aspirus Weston Clinic	Village of Weston
Aspirus Wittenberg Clinic	Village of Wittenberg
Marshfield Children's Hospital	City of Marshfield
Marshfield Clinic Colby Center	City of Colby
Marshfield Clinic Marshfield Center	City of Marshfield
Marshfield Clinic Mosinee Center	City of Mosinee
Marshfield Clinic Stratford Center	Village of Stratford
Marshfield Clinic Wausau Center	City of Wausau
Marshfield Clinic Wittenberg Center	Village of Wittenberg
Marshfield Medical Center Hospital-Marshfield	City of Marshfield
Marshfield Medical Center Hospital-Weston	Village of Weston
North Central Health Care	City of Wausau
Wausau VA Clinic	City of Rothschild

Education

Educational facilities are important for the future development and growth of a region. Marathon County is served by 16 public school districts which have school facilities in the County or just outside of the County, such as Marshfield and Rosholt School Districts. See Table 3-8. Northcentral Technical College maintains facilities in the City of Wausau and the Village of Spencer in Marathon County, as well as in the nearby Cities of Antigo and Medford, and the Village of Wittenberg. Mid-state Technical College maintains facilities in the nearby Cities of Marshfield and Stevens Point. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point maintains campuses in the City of Wausau, as well as nearby in the Cities of Stevens Point and Marshfield. These institutions provide advanced educational opportunities for Marathon County residents.

Table 3-8: Public Schools
Abbotsford School District
Antigo School District
Athens School District
Auburndale School District
Colby School District
D.C. Everest School District
Edgar School District
Marathon School District
Marshfield School District
Medford School District
Mosinee School District
Rosholt School District
Spencer School District
Stratford School District
Wausau School District
Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey

As part of the previous (2013) Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan update, Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department worked with the University of Wisconsin – River Falls Survey Research Center and mailed surveys to two populations, which included a random sample of 1,149 Marathon County general households (40% response rate) and 745 agricultural stakeholders (45% response rate) in May 2013. The purpose of the farmland preservation survey was to help Marathon County understand the citizens' perspective on the issues, trends, and proposed recommendations for strategies of farmland preservation and addressing agricultural issues in the County. The survey provided valuable insight into the citizens' views, and revealed that there are few differences between the opinions of the general public and agricultural stakeholders. Survey respondents prioritized five policy concerns in the following order of importance, highest to lowest:

- Groundwater quality
- Surface water quality
- Conservation practices
- Landowner incentives
- Direct development

Conclusion from the survey indicated that respondents identified issues and trends that are a source of concern about the future of farmland in Marathon County:

- Six in ten agricultural stakeholders said that land fragmentation and the cost of farmland are concerns.
- More than four in ten believe that productive farmland won't be available in 20 years (2033) in the County.

Conclusions also indicated support for various policies and tools to address the concerns:

- Half of agricultural stakeholders and the general public favored or strongly favored using farmland preservation zoning.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that non-agricultural development should be concentrated near existing communities or other developed areas.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that if development is allowed in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.

A complete summary of the survey process and results is included in Appendix B.

Chapter 4: AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES/TRENDS

The Growth and Preservation Challenge

Agriculture is at the core of Marathon County's heritage, identity, culture, and economic and land use future. Marathon County's farmers and farmland owners own and manage approximately 477,577 total acres of land, over 47% of the land base.



Approximately 329,036 acres of this land is cropland. (2022 USDA – Census of Agriculture) Beginning in the late 1970s, Marathon County initiated land use planning and zoning efforts to slow the conversion of cropland, reduce fragmentation of cropland and woodland, and to address nonpoint source pollution runoff concerns. The commitment to farmland preservation in Marathon County is great. In this Farmland Preservation Plan, Marathon County is integrating economic development into the agricultural vision. Citizens and local officials embrace the diversity of agricultural production methods used throughout the county. Through this plan, the County attempts to integrate these efforts into a coherent strategy to support a changing agricultural industry.

Marathon County faces numerous challenges to agriculture as we move forward, which point to the need for farmland preservation planning, such as:

- Continued residential expansion in agricultural areas as non-farmers look for rural quality of life, lower taxes, and other rural lifestyle benefits of residing in agricultural areas.
- Non-farm growth pressures have increased the opportunities to "cash out" through farm sales or farmland conversion.
- The changing scale of agriculture, which requires substantial economic investments, and often results in consolidation of farms and the concentration of livestock on larger farms.
- Continued shift to row crop farming, primarily corn and soybeans, as smaller livestock operations transition to other types of farming. The resulting loss of forage crops increases soil erosion, which impacts long-term farmland productivity and decreases surface water quality.

The tables in this chapter illustrate trends in agricultural land resources and land values in Marathon County. These trends provide some definition to the challenges facing Marathon County. Trends were evaluated by reviewing USDA - Census of Agriculture and National Agricultural Statistics Service data.

Farmland Acres

Table 4-1 illustrates changes in the number of farms and land in farms between 2012, 2017, and 2022. In the past 10 years, the number of farms decreased 9.1% from 2,266 farms in 2012 to 2,059 farms in 2022. Though the number of farms decreased, the average size of farms (acres per farm) increased from 211 acres in 2012 to 232 acres in 2022. The loss of farms primarily occurred in "traditional" medium size farms of 50-999 acres, with significant growth in the number of both small farms (less than 50 acres) and large farms (1,000 acres or more.)

Table 4-1: Land in Farms – 2012, 2017, and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of farms**	**No. of Acres**	**% Change No. of Farms**	**% Change No. of Acres**
Number of Farms	2,266	-	2,237	-	2,059	-	-9.1	-
Land in Farms	-	479,045	-	473,147	-	477,577	-	-0.3
Average Size of Farm	-	211	-	212	-	232	-	10.0
Approx. Total Land Area	-	988,804	-	988,783	-	988,783	-	0.0
Percent of Land in Farms	-	48.40%	-	47.90%	-	48.30%	-	-0.2
Size of Farms:								
1 to 9 acres	105	463	228	894	174	715	65.7	54.4
10 to 49 acres	420	12,000	528	15,037	496	13,145	18.1	9.5
50 to 69 acres	159	9,358	120	7,234	142	8,238	-10.7	-12.0
70 to 99 acres	296	24,293	251	20,277	211	17,377	-28.7	-28.5
100 to 139 acres	242	28,729	208	24,753	199	23,314	-17.8	-18.8
140 to 179 acres	202	32,291	158	24,753	161	25,322	-20.3	-21.6
180 to 219 acres	176	34,687	129	25,549	119	23,306	-32.4	-32.8
220 to 259 acres	139	32,925	105	25,075	101	24,055	-27.3	-26.9
260 to 499 acres	357	124,620	319	113,060	262	90,210	-26.6	-27.6
500 to 999 acres	119	78,984	127	81,822	114	75,169	-4.2	-4.8
1,000 to 1999 acres	31	40,260	40	54,963	45	67,325	45.2	67.2
2,000 acres or more	20	60,435	24	79,747	35	109,401	75.0	81.0

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Farmland Uses

Table 4-2 illustrates farmland uses in the County between 2012, 2017, and 2022. The amount of permanent pastureland had the largest reduction at 20.8%. Total cropland acreage increased by 2.8%, while harvested cropland increased by 0.9% in the County. The total amount of woodland decreased by 3.1%.

Table 4-2: Farmland Uses – 2012, 2017, and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**% Change No. of Farms**	**% Change No. of Acres**
Total Cropland	2,026	320,051	1,944	322,853	1,852	329,036	-8.6	2.8
Harvested Cropland	1917	302,081	1808	298,524	1,720	304,708	-10.3	0.9
Total Woodland	1,507	93,200	1,392	94,883	1,257	90,342	-16.6	-3.1
Permanent Pasture (other than cropland or wooded pasture)	1119	29,744	1024	26,876	828	23,552	-26.0	-20.8
Land in Farmsteads (bldgs, livestock, facilities, ponds, roads, etc.)	1,780	36,050	1,593	28,535	1,439	34,647	-19.2	-3.9
Pastureland, all types	1,342	49,971	1221	53,447	1,029	41,467	-23.3	-17.0
Land used for vegetables and vegetables harvested for sale	126	2,647	174	3,056	156	3,189	23.8	20.5
Land in Orchards	43	97	45	97	57	156	32.6	60.8

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Farmland Values and Sales

Agricultural land values in Marathon County have risen dramatically. Table 4-3 shows the value of agricultural land sold from 2010 to 2019, and the fate of the land after the sale, whether it remained in agricultural use or was converted to another use. The price of land increased significantly from $2,717 per acre in 2010 to $4,162 per acre in 2019, an increase of 53 percent in 10 years. Much of the increase is likely attributable to increasing competition for land, especially by dairy farms that are expanding in size.

Table 4-3: Marathon County Agricultural Land Sales

	Agricultural Land Continuing in Agricultural Use		Agricultural Land Being Diverted to Other Uses		Total of All Ag Land	
Year	**No. Acres Sold**	**$ per Acre**	**No. Acres Sold**	**$ per Acre**	**No. Acres Sold**	**$ per Acre**
2010	4,219	2,668	207	3,719	4,426	2,717
2011	3,948	2,915	35	3,509	3,983	2,920
2012	4,465	3,252	135	3,545	4,600	3,260

2013	4,033	3,640	129	3,120	4,162	3,624
2014	4,529	4,227	222	4,086	4,751	4,220
2015	3,505	4,407	242	4,861	3,747	4,436
2016	3,936	4,370	427	4,838	4,363	4,416
2017	2,995	4,153	222	6,354	3,217	4,305
2018	2,856	4,453	401	4,039	3,257	4,402
2019	3,738	4,165	5	1,500	3,743	4,162
% Change 2010-2019	**-11.4**	**56.1**	**-97.6**	**-59.7**	**-15.4**	**53.2**

Source: USDA – National Agricultural Statistics Service

Chapter 5: AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC IMPACT, GROWTH, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture in Marathon County, like the rest of Wisconsin, has experienced significant changes over the past 40 years. There are numerous reasons for these shifts in agricultural activities and practices including changes in economics, population growth, societal changes, operational practices, support services, and state and national policies. The agricultural industry's reduction in the number of dairy farms, along with the increases in corn and soybean production are perhaps the most prominent of the changes. Even with the changes in the agricultural industry, Marathon County remains one of the top counties in the state in terms of sales of several agricultural commodities. Dairy farming, the centerpiece of the County's agricultural economy, is impressive with over 65,000 milking cows.

Agriculture in Marathon County provides 11,021 jobs, accounts for $2.8 billion in economic activity annually, and contributes $71.4 million in taxes (sales, property, and income tax) annually. (UW-Extension "Agriculture Works Hard for Marathon County" 2019 fact sheet). Agriculture's vitality is founded upon the sustainability of commodity prices, soil and water resources, and certainty of land use. The tables in this chapter define in greater detail the economic influence and impacts that agriculture has in Marathon County.

Farm Market Values

The total average market value per farm grew nearly 110% in a 10-year period and the estimated market value of land and buildings grew nearly 91% (Table 5-1). This illustrates a very strong agricultural economy in Marathon County.

Table 5-1: Farm Market Values

	2012		2017		2022	
	No. of Farms	**Amount**	**No. of Farms**	**Amount**	**No. of Farms**	**Amount**
Est. Market value of land & bldgs	2,266	1,396,828 (in $1000)	2,237	2,247,939 (in $1000)	2,059	2,663,019 (in $1000)
Average market value per farm	-	$616,429	-	$1,004,890	-	$1,293,356
Average market value per acre	-	$2,916	-	$4,751	-	$5,576

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Table 5-2 lists the number of farms in selected value ranges. This table highlights the tremendous growth in both the number and value of larger farms in Marathon County over the ten-year period of 2012 – 2022; with the number of farms in all value range over $1,000,000 increasing substantially, and the number of farms in all value ranges less than $1,000,000 decreasing significantly.

Table 5-2: Farm Values

Marathon County	2012 No. of Farms	2017 No. of Farms	2022 No. of Farms	% Change 2012-2022
$1 to $49,999	135	129	85	-37.0
$50,000 to $99,999	126	133	101	-19.8
$100,000 to $199,999	406	362	252	-37.9
$200,000 to $499,999	836	660	617	-26.2
$500,000 to $999,999	454	388	401	-11.7
$1,000,000 to $1,999,999	193	302	299	55.0
$2,000,000 to $4,999,999	89	184	183	105.6

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Farm Organization

Table 5-3 illustrates how farm ownership in Marathon County is organized. The number of family or individual-owned farms has decreased by 13.1% from 2012 to 2022. Over the same time period, the number of Corporation - family held farms has increased by 13.0%. However, the vast majority of farms in the County are still family or individual-owned (83.8% of farms), and the number of Corporation - other than family held farms has decreased.

Table 5-3: Type of Farm Organization

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**
Family or Individual	1,987	332,435	1,969	311,648	1,726	290,317	-13.1	-12.7
Partnership	155	57,582	128	60,686	158	60,884	1.9	5.7
Corporation - family held	108	75,763	118	85,946	122	(D)	13.0	13.4
Corporation - other than family held	8	10400	5	(D)	4	(D)	-50.0	(D)
Other-cooperative, estate or trust, institution, etc.	8	2,865	17	(D)	49	7159	512.5	149.9
Total Farms	**2,266**	**479,045**	**2,237**	**458,280**	**2,059**	**477,577**	**-9.1**	**-0.3**

(D) = Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Types of Farms

Table 5-4 indicates number of farms and number of animals by livestock and poultry in the County. The information illustrates the changes in farming in Marathon County, as the number of farms with milk cows in the County dropped by 47.9% from 677 farms in 2012 to 353 in 2022, but the number of milk cows actually increased slightly by 2.8% to 65,598 cows in 2022. The number of beef cattle increased by 35.2% from 2012 to 2022, while the number of farms with beef cattle only increased by 11.8% over the same time period. Hogs and pigs, both in number and farms, increased by 6.6% and 14.5% respectively over the 10-year period. The poultry layers industry in the County continues to increase, as both the number of farms and birds increased from 2012 to 2022.

Table 5-4: Livestock and Poultry

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	% Change 2012-2022
Marathon County	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Animals**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Animals**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Animals**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Animals**
Cattle & calves inventory	1246	144,159	1,113	144,500	915	151,139	-26.6	4.8
Beef cattle	407	6,190	473	7,374	455	8,369	11.8	35.2
Milk cows	677	63,791	526	65,358	353	65,598	-47.9	2.8
Cattle & calves sold	1085	60,106	904	73,328	783	72,949	-27.8	21.4
Hogs & pigs inventory	55	894	67	1,287	63	953	14.5	6.6
Hogs & pigs sold	58	1,566	75	1,666	73	1,185	25.9	-24.3
Sheep & lamb inventory	55	1,244	76	1,633	70	1,011	27.3	-18.7
Layers inventory	221	5,968	306	28,652	304	28,127	37.6	371.3
Broilers & other meat-type chickens sold	51	10,856	62	23,770	43	7,109	-15.7	34.5

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Changes in crop farming in Marathon County are illustrated in Table 5-5. In 2022, forage land used for hay, haylage, grass silage, and greenchop was the largest crop by acreage (97,948 acres) grown in the County. Corn used for grain is second at 89,973 acres, followed by soybeans at 67,481 acres. However, the acres of soybeans are increasing rapidly, with an increase of 29.2% from 2012-2022. Marathon County is the top ginseng growing county in the state and produces 90-95 percent of the ginseng grown in the United States.

Table 5-5: Crops

	2012			2017			2022			% Change 2012-2022	% Change 2012-2022	% Change 2012-2022
Marathon County	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of bushels/ tons**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of bushels/ tons**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of bushels/ tons**	**No. of Farms**	**No. of Acres**	**No. of bushels / tons**
Corn for grain	1030	75,727	8,451,387	627	68,817	9,476,260	725	89,973	13,337,006	-29.6	18.8	57.8
Corn for silage or greenchop (1)	745	44,862	653,217	578	44,750	723,749	289	39,717	697,183	-61.2	-11.5	6.7
Winter wheat for grain	52	2752	138,541	52	2532	131,498	59	4,348	355,730	13.5	58.0	156.8
Oats for grain	340	7,321	414,129	184	4,814	275,915	132	5,759	447,142	-61.2	-21.3	8.0
Barley for grain	84	1807	77,932	26	580	23,498	10	245	20,743	-88.1	-86.4	-73.4
Soybeans for beans	678	51,988	1,831,915	623	61,849	2,599,398	657	67,481	3,116,210	-3.1	29.8	70.1
Forage–land used for all hay & all haylage, grass silage, & greenchop (1)	1427	111,040	297,884	1,321	111,588	367,306	1,234	97,948	306,893	-13.5	-11.8	3.0
Vegetables harvested for sale	93	3,889	_	174	3,109	_	156	3,189	_	67.7	-18.0	_
Sweet Potatoes for sale	8	1,132	_	7	1	_	1	(D)	_	-87.5	(D)	_
Potatoes for sale	1	(D)	_	23	1,389	_	13	(D)	_	1200.0	(D)	_
Land in orchards	43	97	_	45	97	_	57	156	_	32.6	60.8	_
Ginseng-harvested	53	224	_	76	780	_	79	695	_	49.1	210.3	_

(1) = Crops shown are in tons. (D) = Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.
Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Specialty and Nontraditional Farms and Crops

Specialty crop farming may provide additional agricultural production opportunities within developing commercial and residential areas where large tracts of agricultural land are not available. Unlike traditional crops such as corn, soybeans, and hay, the profitability of farming nontraditional crops is not closely tied to large acreage requirements. Specialty crops can provide substantial revenues to the County's economy while diversifying and stabilizing the agricultural industry in the face of increased development pressures. These crops can provide supplemental income opportunities for traditional farm operators as well as opportunities for hobby farmers and recreational landowners. Having a local market for specialty crops is also important to enhance the growth of the sector.

Table 5-6: Floriculture Crops and Products

Marathon County	2012	2017	2022
Number of Farms	21	31	22
Sq. Ft. under glass or other protection	233,131	104,272	71,352
Acres in the open	1	48	11
Value of sales($)	1,682,621	1,073,409	762,043

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

An illustration of specialty and nontraditional farming operations in Marathon County is provided in Tables 5-6 and 5-7. Table 5-8 illustrates select nontraditional farm practices in Marathon County in 2022.

Table 5-7: Maple Syrup

Marathon County	2012	2017	2022
Number of Farms	107	153	133
Number of Taps	68,246	154,226	214,538
Syrup Produced (Gallons)	7,776	42,089	62,295

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Table 5-8: Select Nontraditional Farm Practices in Marathon County – 2022

Practiced alley cropping, silvopasture, forest farming, riparian forest buffers or windbreaks (farms)	Harvested biomass for use in renewable energy (farms)	Practiced rotational or management-intensive grazing (farms)	Raised or sold veal calves (farms)	On-farm packing facility (farms)
49	14	234	6	24

Source: 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Certified Organic Farming

Wisconsin has a thriving certified organic farming industry, and Marathon County plays an integral role in that success. In 2021, Wisconsin ranked second in the Nation for the total number of certified organic farms, with 1,455 farms, eight (8) percent of the Nation's total. (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service – 2021 Organic Survey.) Marathon County currently (2023) has 45 certified organic farms producing products ranging from milk, meat, and crops to fruits, vegetables, herbs, and more, and is home to numerous certified organic processors and handlers. (USDA – Organic INTEGRITY Database)

Agricultural Product Market Values

The market value of agricultural products produced/sold on Marathon County farms increased by 48.7% during a 10-year span from 2012-2022 (Table 5-9). The average sales per farm increased by 62.9% over the period.

Table 5-9: Total Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold - 2012, 2017, and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		2012-2022	
	No. of farms	Amount ($1,000)	No. of farms	Amount ($1,000)	No. of farms	Amount ($1,000)	% Change No. of Farms	% Change Market Value
Total sales	2,266	391,122	2,237	413,595	2,059	581,877	-9.1	48.7
Average sales per farm (dollars)		172,605		184,888		281,236	-	62.9
Value of sales:								
Less than $1,000	365	61	458	112	307	53	-15.9	-13.1
$1,000 to $2,499	145	250	185	296	159	270	9.7	8.0
$2,500 to $4,999	168	631	162	565	136	492	-19.0	-22.0
$5,000 to $9,999	215	1506	208	1446	244	1,748	13.5	16.1
$10,000 to $19,999	202	2,876	183	2,615	187	2,649	-7.4	-7.9
$20,000 to $24,999	68	1522	71	1531	53	1,178	-22.1	-22.6
$25,000 to $39,999	134	4,172	121	3,902	123	3,938	-8.2	-5.6
$40,000 to $49,999	80	3,538	51	2,260	80	3,546	0.0	0.2
$50,000 to $99,999	177	13,223	179	13,105	189	13,206	6.8	-0.2
$100,000 to $249,999	386	66,632	253	40,810	207	33,488	-46.4	-49.7
$250,000 to $499,999	239	84,184	195	68,231	171	62,895	-28.5	-25.3
$500,000 or more	117	212,529	171	278,661	203	455,604	73.5	114.4

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

The market value of farm products sold from Marathon County farms in 2022 are as follows:

- $362,775,000 – Milk
- $1,392,000 – Poultry and Eggs
- $2,492,000 – Wheat
- $70,310,000 – Corn
- $40,064,000– Soybeans

Source: 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

The market value of livestock, dairy, and poultry products increased from 2012 to 2022 as cattle and calves increased by 62.4%, while milk and other dairy products from cows increased by 45.2% (Table 5-10). During the same time period, farm production expenses increased on average per farm by 60.5% (Table 5-11). Similarly, average net cash farm income grew by 61.9% (Table 5-12).

Table 5-10: Market Value of Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry Products Sold – 2012, 2017 and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount**
Total livestock, poultry, & their products	1261	294,118	1229	312,606	992	430,414	-21.3	46.3
Poultry and eggs	156	(D)	184	671	193	1,392	23.7	(D)
Cattle and calves	1085	40,143	904	47,011	783	65,200	-27.8	62.4
Milk & other dairy products from cows	678	249,790	533	262,946	347	362,775	-48.8	45.2
Hogs and pigs	58	193	75	173	73	185	25.9	-4.1
Sheep, goats and their products	60	364	71	206	55	180	-8.3	-50.5

(D) = Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Table 5-11: Farm Production Expenses - 2012, 2017 and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount**
Total farm production expenses	2,266	300,298	2,237	334,352	2,059	437,956	-9.1	45.8
Average per farm	-	132,524	-	149,465	-	212,703	-	60.5
Property taxes paid	2,186	8,814	2,089	11,297	1,937	10,928	-11.4	24.0

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Table 5-12: Income from Farm-related Sources - 2012, 2017, and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount**
Total income from farm related sources, gross before taxes and expenses	1375	10,695	1,315	13,051	1,333	12,926	-3.1	20.9
Net cash farm income average per farm	-	47,720	-	41,806	-	77,254	-	61.9

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Agri-Tourism and Direct Marketing Sales

Agri-tourism is another opportunity that can benefit farms of all sizes and enhance the local economy. Agri-tourism can potentially be an economic development engine providing support to local businesses by creating demand for new services and providing supplemental income to agricultural operations. Sales made directly at a farm often result in greater returns to the producer than if agricultural commodities are sold at wholesale prices. The economic impact of agri-tourism (Table 5-13) is more immediate and provides a direct connection between locally owned and operated farms and the consumer.

Table 5-13: Agri-tourism and Recreational Services - 2012, 2017, and 2022

	2012		2017		2022		% Change 2012-2022	
Marathon County	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount ($1,000)**	**No. of farms**	**Amount**
Agri-tourism & recreational services	21	86	2	(D)	12	24	-42.9	-72.1

(D) = Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

Source: 2012, 2017, and 2022 USDA - Census of Agriculture

Direct marketing sales also add to Marathon County's economy. Marathon County farmers sell directly to consumers through roadside stands, farmers' markets, auctions, pick-your-own operations, and Community Supported Agriculture.

Agricultural Infrastructure (Businesses and Services)

Agricultural infrastructure includes businesses and services such as farm cooperatives, feed mills, grain elevators, equipment dealers, farm supply businesses, and dairy and food processing facilities. A listing of agricultural businesses and service providers in Marathon County is shown in Appendix C. (Note, this list is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be all-inclusive, and does not represent an endorsement or recommendation of any business or service provider that is listed, nor a condemnation of any business or service provider that is not listed.) Historically (1950's – 1980's), there were more facilities throughout the County due to transportation limitations and smaller markets. The more recent trend has been fewer but larger or expanding facilities. In recent years, several facilities have expanded

or combined in the County and regionally, and this trend is anticipated to continue. Nevertheless, the number and breadth of agricultural businesses and service providers is still very extensive, with over 150 businesses and providers, many of which have multiple locations and stores serving Marathon County farmers.

When looking ahead to anticipated changes in the nature, scope, location and focus of agricultural production, processing, supply and distribution, Marathon County is very likely to continue to see the trends that have already been mentioned above, related to agricultural businesses. When looking at what trends may look like over the course of this plan, it can best be summarized as “fewer, but larger farms,” and further consolidation across all sectors of the agricultural industries.

Similar to much of the country, livestock numbers have been holding steady in Marathon County, but there are simply more animals on fewer farms. Marathon County had approximately 1500 farms in the 1990s and is down to just 500 farms in 2024. However, animal unit numbers have not changed over this course of time, and Marathon County is seeing increasing trends towards large farms that exceed 1,000 animal units and require a WPDES permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. It is anticipated, over the next two decades, Marathon County will continue to see farm numbers under 1,000 animal units drop, and farm numbers over 1,000 animal units to increase by approximately 25%. Marathon County currently has 15 farms 1,000 animal units or more. The County anticipates it will continue to see “dairy as King” in the “Heart of America’s Dairyland” over the next several decades and would not anticipate other livestock farms such as beef, hog, or poultry to continue to exceed the levels that they are at currently. The current and future large farms are predicted to implement the production of natural gas through the installation of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) digesters into their facilities. This provides a new revenue stream for the farm and also provides natural gas from the production of methane, using sources of manure already on the farm. There is currently one RNG digester in Marathon County, with several other large farms considering the installation of a digester.

Currently most of the Marathon County Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) farms are located within western Marathon County, where the heaviest agriculture to remain for the foreseeable future. Similar to livestock farms, it would be anticipated that milk and meat processing facilities will continue to consolidate and grow. Many of the smaller facilities (often called Mom and Pop shops) and traditional small creameries and butchers have been bought out over the last two decades, and many of the remaining facilities continue to grow into large corporations.

The focus of agronomics in Marathon County continues to be grain and forage production for livestock and cash grain rotations of corn and soybeans. It is forecasted that cash grain rotations will continue to increase as smaller farms sell off their livestock and those farmers are left with cropland where they are still looking to make a profit. While cash grain rotations are often a source of concern for conservation-minded individuals, there has been increasing momentum in the realm of soil health practices. Cover crops, no-till, reduced tillage, and the incorporation of perennial grasses and pollinator plants have become increasingly popular over the last several years with the introduction of a producer-led farmer group, named Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation (EPPIC). This producer-led group has done extensive outreach and education along with the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department to increase awareness of the many benefits of implementing conservation practices within traditional crop rotations. Marathon County will likely see an increasing trend in these practices over the next two decades, as incentive-based payments generously reward the farmers that

implement these practices. Several United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs, such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which ensure perennial grasses on the landscape for a period of 10 years, have become increasingly popular as the awareness for these generous programs continues to grow in the County. It is projected that these two programs specifically will continue to see exponential growth in Western Marathon County.

Chapter 6: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION STEPS, AND COUNTY POLICIES (That guide and manage farmland preservation, agriculture, and agricultural development.)

A key element of the Farmland Preservation Plan update process was to identify current farmland preservation, agriculture, and agricultural development goals and objectives that will preserve and enhance farmland and agriculture in Marathon County. The current goals and objectives, along with action steps that can be taken to implement the goals and objectives, are detailed in the 2016 Marathon County Comprehensive Plan. Many remain similar to those that were identified in the 2013 Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, and all support the Comprehensive Plan's overarching goal of Marathon County being the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in Wisconsin.

Listed below is the vision of agriculture in Marathon County, which was developed during the 2013 Farmland Preservation Plan update, followed by the goals, objectives, and action steps from the 2016 Marathon County Comprehensive Plan that are related to and/or have an impact on farmland preservation, agriculture, and/or agricultural development in Marathon County. Rounding out this chapter, is a summary of County policies (plans, ordinances, codes) that guide and regulate farmland preservation, agriculture, and/or agricultural development in Marathon County.

Vision of Agriculture in Marathon County

Marathon County agriculture will be diverse, sustainable, and profitable now and in the future. Through shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and community engagement/cooperation, we will enjoy a sufficient and sustainable supply of groundwater, high quality water resources, and productive soil. Agriculture will be supported by adequate economic and structural infrastructure; access to technological advances in equipment, communication, and waste management; access to local, domestic, and international markets, ample land supply, and balanced mix of land uses.

Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps (That are related to and/or have an impact on farmland preservation, agriculture, and/or agricultural development in Marathon County.)

Community Character *(Chapter 4 of Comprehensive Plan)*

Community Character Goal: The local history, culture, social pride, and community character are established and enhanced as defining elements which make Marathon County a vibrant and inviting place to be.

Objectives and Action Steps:

1. Promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options that meet the needs of all community members.
   c. Post and routinely update information on housing agencies and programs on the County website.
   h. Assist local governments in evaluating codes related to temporary, manufactured, and/or mobile housing to better serve migrant workers and the agricultural economy.
2. Preserve and protect the county's landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
   b. Develop model ordinances for conservation subdivisions, traditional neighborhood development, and land division that can apply to each section of the Transect.

Natural Resources *(Chapter 5 of Comprehensive Plan)*

Natural Resources Goal: The natural resources of Marathon County are managed in a balanced way, so they are protected and preserved, for current and future generations' health, enjoyment, and benefit.

Objectives and Action Steps:

1. Protect vulnerable natural resources.
   b. Develop a comprehensive approach to protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
   g. Continue to seek grants and other funding sources to enhance and protect areas with significant natural resources and features.
2. Promote sound land use decisions that conserve and preserve natural resources in decisions with economic development and growth.
   a. Update existing land use policies to address sprawl and natural resource protection.
   d. Develop a Land Capability Index
5. Promote and improve soil health.
   a. Continue to monitor compliance with the soil conservation standards of the Farmland Preservation Program.
   b. Develop strategies to encourage best management practices to reduce agricultural soil runoff to protect water and soil quality.
7. Protect and preserve prime agricultural areas.
   a. Identify areas in Marathon County with prime farm soils that are most vulnerable to conversion to non-farm land uses.
   b. Work to expand the Agricultural Enterprise Areas within the County.
   c. Expand Farmland Preservation Zoning to reduce fragmentation and protect prime agricultural soils.
   d. Encourage the protection of agriculture by continuing to encourage towns to participate in County zoning.
   e. Encourage funding mechanisms to provide technical assistance to agricultural landowners and operators to develop nutrient management plans and implement best management practices.
   f. Work with UW-Extension to meet with local agricultural operators to identify their individual needs and opportunities to best assist them in retaining and improving their farming operations.

Land Use *(Chapter 9 of Comprehensive Plan)*

Land Use Goal: Marathon County makes sound land use decisions which balance the needs of agriculture, recreation, economic development, and growth to wisely maximize the land's potential.

Objectives and Action Steps:

1. Minimize scattered rural development and preserve rural character.
    a. Consider providing incentives, such as density bonuses, to encourage cluster or conservation subdivisions, particularly in areas with natural development constraints.
    b. Consider adjusting minimum lot sizes or establishing a sliding-scale zoning district to provide for limited residential development in areas where agricultural uses and/or rural natural character should be preserved.
2. Preserve active farming.
    a. Continue to work to implement the Farmland Preservation Plan.
    b. Identify and map areas in the County that should be preserved for active farming and work cooperatively with local municipalities to coordinate zoning to restrict non-farm development.
    c. Consider requiring larger parcel sizes or restricting non-farm land uses in areas under County zoning with significant amounts of prime farmland and/or existing active farms.
3. Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized areas.
    a. Identify underutilized areas for redevelopment.
    b. Continue to work cooperatively with local municipalities to coordinate infrastructure improvements to facilitate redevelopment.
    c. Continue to work with local municipalities as appropriate to facilitate the required permit process related to environmental remediation.
4. Provide tools for managing and coordinating growth.
    a. Encourage land use patterns that support alternative modes of transportation, including clustering of businesses and retail establishments (destination density).
    b. Identify areas that should be permanently protected from development, including environmentally significant areas and natural buffers between communities.
    c. Continue to encourage planning throughout the County to ensure efficient land use patterns, to protect natural resources, and to avoid the fragmentation of natural and agricultural land.
    d. Develop model community and neighborhood design principles to enhance and protect community character while accommodating growth.
    e. Continue to routinely update the zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they support the goals and objectives outlined in the County and local Comprehensive Plans.
    f. Continue to work cooperatively with municipalities to eliminate conflicts between county and local zoning and development regulations.
    g. Promote community land use planning in the State Highway 29 Corridor that incorporates the changes to the transportation system and other impact on land use and other uses.

Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development *(Chapter 10 of Comprehensive Plan)*

Workforce Development Goal: Marathon County is a community where every person can find a family supporting job and every business to have a strong workforce.

Objectives and Action Steps:

1. Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.
    a. Work with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, (NCWWDB) to ensure a well-trained workforce.
2. Promote and increase communication between economic development, workforce development, and other organizations.
    a. Continue to improve the quality of life in the County to attract new people to the local labor force.
    b. Encourage and support partnerships between Northcentral Technical College, UW-Stevens Point at Wausau, and others to provide a diverse range of high-quality educational services for local and regional businesses.
    c. Encourage communication and cooperation between employers, school districts, and higher education institutions to ensure a well-trained, competitive workforce with skills to meet the needs of a changing marketplace.

Economic Development Goal: Marathon County's a diverse economy, a place of opportunities where people and businesses can grow and be successful.

Objectives and Action Steps:

2. Organize effectively and develop programs and tools to support key industries and a healthy economy.
    a. Establish a revolving loan fund to assist new farmers in entering the industry and assist existing farmers with adoption of new technologies or practices that improve the viability of agriculture.
    b. Work with UW-Extension and others to provide education on best management practices to enable area loggers and farmers to be competitive, profitable, and employ environmentally safe practices.
3. Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.
    a. Respond to changing economic conditions and opportunities through periodic review and updating of economic development strategies, policies, investments, and program.
    b. Work with the Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO) to support a revolving loan fund to provide low interest financing to enable new entrants to get into farming and to enable existing farmers to adopt new technology or new products.
    c. Enhance awareness of MCDEVCO as the primary point of contact for business expansion and start-up information.
4. Encourage a globally competitive economy.
    b. Encourage MCDEVCO to work with regional and state agencies.
5. Maintain infrastructure to support economic growth.
    a. Maintain a safe highway network to provide access to all communities in the County.
    b. Support technology in the workplace, particularly through access to broadband.

e. Pursue federal and state funding to develop a county-wide revolving loan fund to assist communities with the clean-up of contaminated sites.

County Policies

Marathon County has in place various policies (plans, ordinances, codes) that guide and manage farmland preservation, agriculture, and/or agricultural development in Marathon County. A brief summary of each of those follows. (More detail of each can be found by viewing the respective documents.)

Land and Water Resource Management Plan (2021-2030)

Under the guidance of WI Chapter 92.10 and ATCP 50.12, Marathon County developed its current Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan in 2021. This plan reflects an overall effort to strengthen conservation programs, available grant funding, and other resources to effectively address the land and water resource management issues facing Marathon County, with the intended outcome of improving and protecting the land and water resources which the county's citizens, farmers, landowners, businesses, and industries are dependent upon for their livelihood. The LWRM Plan was designed to complement and coordinate with existing County plans, especially the County's Comprehensive Plan (including the Farmland Preservation Plan), and as such it focuses on goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes that are consistent with, and support, the Comprehensive Plan's "Natural Resources" and "Land Use" goals and objectives.

The LWRM Plan's goals and objectives are:

Goal 1: Land Resources Are Protected and Improved County-wide.
- Objective 1.1: Reduce soil erosion on all land.
- Objective 1.2: Improve soil health.
- Objective 1.3: Forest management – Private and public forest lands in Marathon County are well managed to support wildlife, recreation, and timber harvest goals.
- Objective 1.4: Protect and preserve prime agricultural lands.

Goal 2: Surface Water Quality is Protected and Improved.
- Objective 2.1: Reduce agricultural runoff to surface water (soil sediment, organics, and nutrients.)
- Objective 2.2: Work to implement the Wisconsin River Watershed and Upper Fox Wolf River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) identified goals.
- Objective 2.3: Protect and enhance natural habitat areas along riparian corridors and wetlands.
- Objective 2.4: Reduce runoff from non-agricultural sources to improve water quality.
- Objective 2.5: Manage lake and stream resources to protect and improve the water quality and habitat.

Goal 3: Groundwater is Protected and Improved.
- Objective 3.1: Protect and enhanced the quality and quantity of groundwater resources.

Goal 4: Actively Educate and Engage Community Stakeholders to Develop an Understanding of Land, Surface Water, and Groundwater Quality Concerns.
- Objective 4.1: Improve public awareness and provide educational opportunities to enhance agricultural practices that protect land and water quality.
- Objective 4.2: Conduct information and education activities as it relates to plan goals.

Animal Waste Management Ordinance

Marathon County has adopted the Animal Waste Management Ordinance – Chapter 11.02 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County. The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the location, design, construction, installation, alteration, operation, maintenance, closure, use, and application of animal waste from all waste storage facilities covered by this ordinance so as to protect the health and safety of residents and transients; prevent the degradation of surface and groundwater thereby preventing the spread of disease and promoting the prosperity and general welfare of the citizens of Marathon County; and protect the groundwater and surface water resources of Marathon County. It is also intended to provide for the administration and enforcement of the ordinance and provide penalties for its violations.

Livestock Facilities Licensing Ordinance

Marathon County has adopted the Livestock Facilities Licensing Ordinance – Chapter 13 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County. The purpose of this ordinance is to comply with requirements of Wis. Stats. 93.90 Chapter ATCP 51, Wisconsin Administrative Code, and to establish standards and authority to protect the public health and safety of the people of Marathon County. This ordinance sets forth the procedures for obtaining a license for the siting of new and expanded livestock facilities in Marathon County. It is also intended to provide for the administration and enforcement of the ordinance and provide penalties for its violations. This ordinance regulates the siting and management of livestock operations between 500 and 999 animal units.

Marathon County Zoning Code

Marathon County has adopted the Marathon County Zoning Code – Chapter 17 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County. The purpose of this code is to secure and provide the following objectives for Marathon County:

- To promote the public health, safety, comfort, and welfare of the residents of Marathon County;
- To establish and maintain zoning districts in order to protect the property rights of all individuals by assuring the compatibility and efficient relationships of uses and practices within districts;
- To facilitate the provision of public utilities and public services;
- To provide the proper arrangement of streets or highways in relation to existing or proposed streets and highways (and the County's transportation plan);
- To promote orderly, efficient, and appropriate development of land;
- To provide uniform procedures and standards for observance by both the approving authority and the subdivider for the division, subdivision, and development of land;
- To provide standards and guidelines for compatibility of designs, materials, layout, landscaping, and effective use of land for quality commercial development;
- To provide reasonable and appropriate visual identification of commercial establishments;
- To ensure adequate provision of open space for light, air, and fire safety;
- To manage traffic via access points and other planning tools;
- To preserve and protect existing trees and vegetation, floodplains, stream corridors, and other areas of scenic and environmental significance from adverse impacts of land development;

- To provide guidelines for development of recreational uses;
- To require the adequate and safe provision of transportation, water, sewage, and drainage in the county;
- To preserve the character and quality of residential neighborhoods;
- To preserve the character and quality of agricultural areas;
- To provide appropriate technical assistance to towns during the planning and zoning phase of extraterritorial zoning discussions; and
- To assure the County's policy of providing an opportunity for towns to opt out of county zoning by conducting a comprehensive revision of zoning ordinances at a minimum of ten-year intervals.

Through this code, the unincorporated towns in Marathon County that have adopted this code are divided into zoning districts. There are 16 zoning districts, which include a “General Agriculture District”, and a special purpose “Farmland Preservation District” in towns that have elected to include that district.

Land Division and Surveying Code

Marathon County has adopted the Land Division and Surveying Code – Chapter 18 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County. The provisions of this Chapter apply to all unincorporated lands within Marathon County. The purpose of this code is to regulate the division of land, and to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The regulations are intended to encourage the most appropriate use of land, to provide the best possible environment for human habitation and to conserve the value of buildings placed upon the land, and to achieve the following objectives:

- The orderly, efficient, and appropriate development of land for the promotion of public comfort, convenience, and prosperity.
- The proper arrangement of roads or highways in relation to existing or proposed roads and highways for safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian movement.
- Adequate and convenient open spaces for traffic, utilities, access for emergency response vehicles and equipment, recreation, light and air, and the avoidance of congestion of the population.
- Conserving and protecting valuable natural resources such as floodplain areas, wetlands, and prime agricultural land and wooded land.
- Facilitating the orderly and efficient provision of Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS).
- Facilitating the orderly and efficient provision of municipal facilities such as transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and playgrounds and the utilization of alternative energy sources at minimum cost and maximum convenience.
- Securing safety from fire, flooding and other dangers.
- Facilitating further re-subdivision of large parcels into smaller parcels of land.
- The accurate surveying of land, preparing and recording of plats, and other land divisions.
- Providing uniform and accurate maps and boundary descriptions of parcels of land.
- The consistent processing of all subdivision and condominium plats by providing uniform procedures and standards by both the approving authority and subdivider as defined herein.

Chapter 7: DETERMINING FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREAS

Purpose

The purpose of the Farmland Preservation Areas includes the following:

- Preserve productive agricultural lands in the long-term.
- Preserve the rural character and aesthetic quality of Marathon County.
- Minimize nonagricultural development on prime farmland.
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategies for Preserving Farmland

In 2016, Marathon County revised the Marathon County Zoning Code – Chapter 17 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County. As part of this process, Marathon County and its participating communities established minimum and maximum lot sizes in non-farmland preservation areas that will meet farmland preservation goals. Smaller lot sizes increase residential density, decreases the rate of land conversion to residential use, and decrease the per capita cost of providing services (sewer, water, etc.). The zoning code also established 35-acre minimum acreage requirements for the Farmland Preservation zoning district for Towns participating under the Marathon County zoning authority.

The Marathon County Land Division and Survey Code – Chapter 18 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County, Title 10: Condominiums and Title 11: Conservation Design Standards establish the use of nontraditional residential subdivision design that would cluster the residential parcels and preserve open space/agricultural land by the use of restrictive covenants, deed restrictions and/or other binding criteria. In so doing the overall density as required by zoning is maintained without sprawling the home sites over a large area. Marathon County will encourage cluster subdivision design; however, typically these types of development have occurred in more urban areas such as villages and cities.

Developing Criteria for Farmland Preservation Areas

To initiate the 2023 Farmland Preservation Area Maps updates, Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department staff attended the 09/05/2023 Environmental Resource Committee (ERC) meeting to discuss the process for designating Farmland Preservation Areas in Towns and to request input and assistance from Town officials for review and input regarding the Farmland Preservation Area Map for their respective town. Over the ensuing months, department staff met with town officials during the Eastern and the Western Towns Association meetings and at a 02/01/2024 open house meeting to confirm compliance with their respective Comprehensive Plans, Future Land Use Maps, and Zoning Maps, on designating Farmland Preservation Areas consistent with their Town land use maps. The Town maps created as a part of this public input process were then consolidated to form the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Area Map. Farmland Preservation Area Maps are included in Appendix D.

Criteria for Determination of Farmland Preservation Areas

The Farmland Preservation Areas are mapped generously in order to maximize the land area in the County that is potentially eligible for participation in the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program, while taking into consideration the future growth areas of the County.

- Lands identified on the 2020 Marathon County orthophotos as farmlands.
- Lands depicted on the Marathon County Existing Land Use Map as agriculture, wetlands, open lands, or woodlands.
- Lands depicted on the Future Land Use and Zoning Maps that allow agricultural or forestry to occur.
- The lands have historically been in agricultural, forestry, or other agricultural related use or are comprised of soils compatible for agricultural use (soil classes 1, 2, and 3).
- Areas consistent with local comprehensive plans, available here:
    - https://www.marathoncounty.gov/projects-planning/municipal-comprehensive-plans

Criteria for Non-Farmland Preservation Areas

Exclude all of the following:

- Local, county, state, and federal lands.
- Cities and village areas.
- Areas served by sewer service.
- Churches, cemeteries, schools, railroads, and trail areas.
- Major subdivisions and high-density residential areas.
- Zoned areas which are based on the most current zoning maps which are not compatible with farming such as industrial, commercial, and high density residentially zoned areas.
- Roads and highways.

Farmland Preservation Area Maps

In the event of inconsistencies between the Farmland Preservation Plan and/or maps and the County Comprehensive Plan and/or maps, the Farmland Preservation Plan and/or maps supersede the County Comprehensive Plan and/or maps, and any and all inconsistencies between the documents shall be resolved in favor of the Farmland Preservation Plan and/or maps.

Chapter 8: FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

To be effective, this Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan update needs to be, and continued to be, implemented. Implementation of the goals, objectives, action steps and policies that are prescribed in Chapter 6. of this Plan will result in the implementation of this plan. (See Chapter 6. for details.)

Farmland Preservation Planning

Successful implementation of this Plan also involves several initial and continuing planning actions and activities, including plan adoption, plan monitoring, plan amendment(s), and plan update.

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this Farmland Preservation Plan update is ensuring that it is adopted in a manner which supports its future use as a tool for detailed and comprehensive decision making. The County included all necessary process steps and required elements for

this Plan to be certified as a Farmland Preservation Plan under Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes and the agricultural element of the County's Comprehensive Plan (s 66.1001(2), WI Statutes). Following certification by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), and a recommendation for approval from the County's Environmental Resources Committee, the Marathon County Board of Supervisors adopted this Farmland Preservation Plan on June 18, 2024.

Plan Monitoring

Periodic monitoring of this Plan and its effectiveness will allow assessment of what is working or not working with this Plan. The County intends to evaluate its decisions relating to Farmland Preservation, Agriculture, and Agricultural Development with the guidance this Plan provides. Further, the County will work to ensure that this Farmland Preservation Plan remains consistent with, and helps advance other components of, the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Amendment(s)

Amendments to this Plan may be appropriate in the years following Plan adoption, in instances where this Plan becomes inconsistent with, or contrary to, emerging policy or trends, or where errors or omissions are identified. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific land use changes or development proposals should be avoided. This Plan was written to provide a certain degree of flexibility for a range of future decisions, which should minimize the need for future amendments.

Plan Update

The State's comprehensive planning law (s 66.1001(2), WI Statutes) requires that the County's Comprehensive Plan be updated at least once every 10 years, but does not provide guidance as to what an update shall entail. Further, the State's farmland preservation law (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) specifies that DATCP may certify a farmland preservation plan for a period that does not exceed 10 years. Given these two State requirements, it is the County's intent to update the Plan again by 2034, at the latest. As opposed to a Plan amendment, this update would likely constitute a substantial re-write of this Plan document and associated maps. However, this re-write need not significantly affect the vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and policy direction of its predecessor, if decision makers consider the prior directions sound.

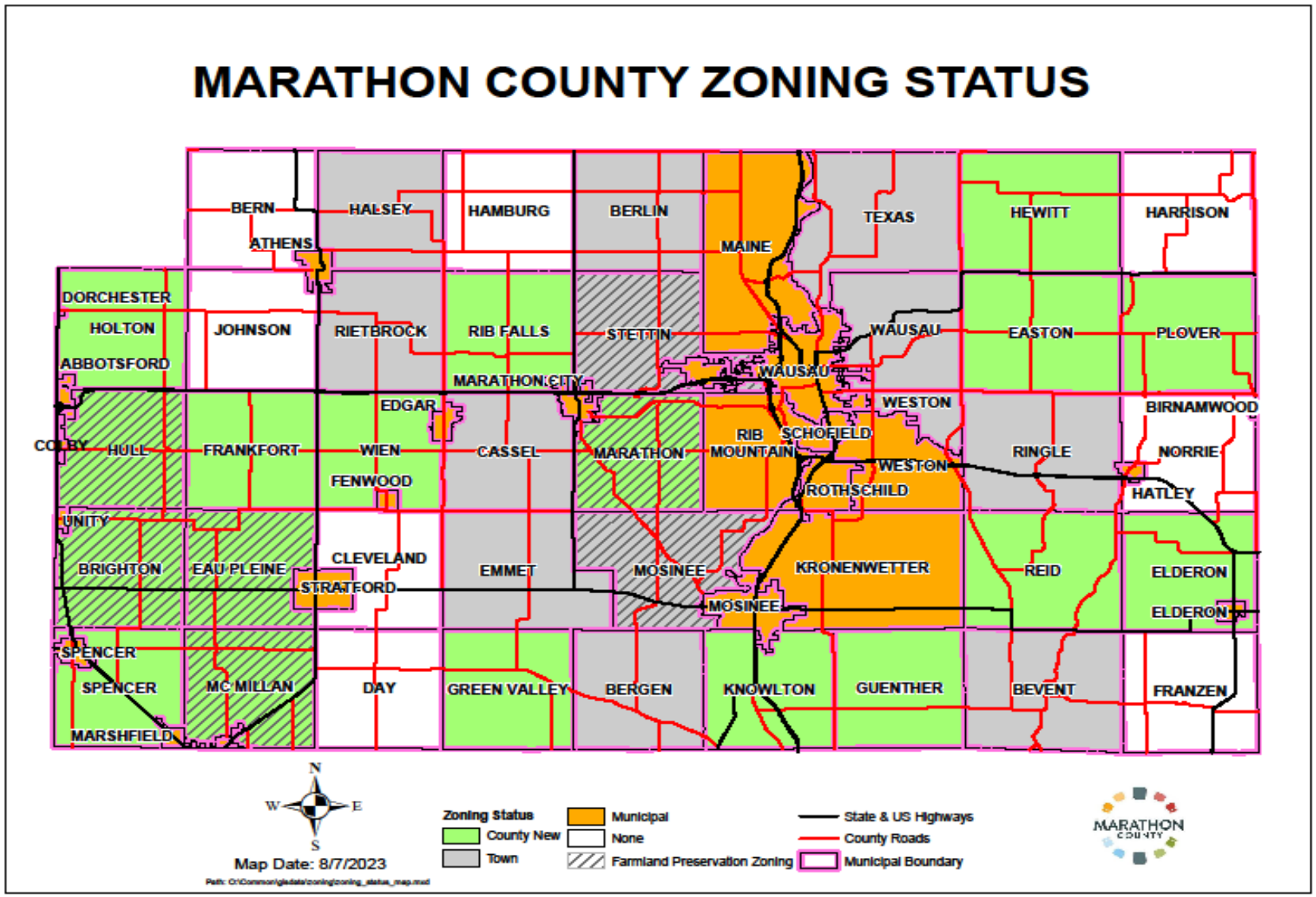
Farmland Preservation Strategies

Successful implementation of this Plan also relies heavily on the use of several strategies that are components of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program: Farmland Preservation Zoning, Agricultural Enterprise Areas, Farmland Preservation Agreements, and landowner incentives/tax credits.

Farmland Preservation Zoning

A "rezone" strategy is the current strategy that Marathon County utilizes to restrict nonagricultural development in the Farmland Preservation Zoning district. The strategy requires a minimum of 35 acres to construct a residence or farm operation. Establishment of a parcel from 2.0 to 4.99 acres is also allowed in the event of a farm consolidation (farm residences constructed prior to January 1, 2014, and farm structures may be separated from the parcel, and not be required to be rezoned). Requests for development or land division that does not meet the standards in the Farmland Preservation Zoning district may be granted or denied

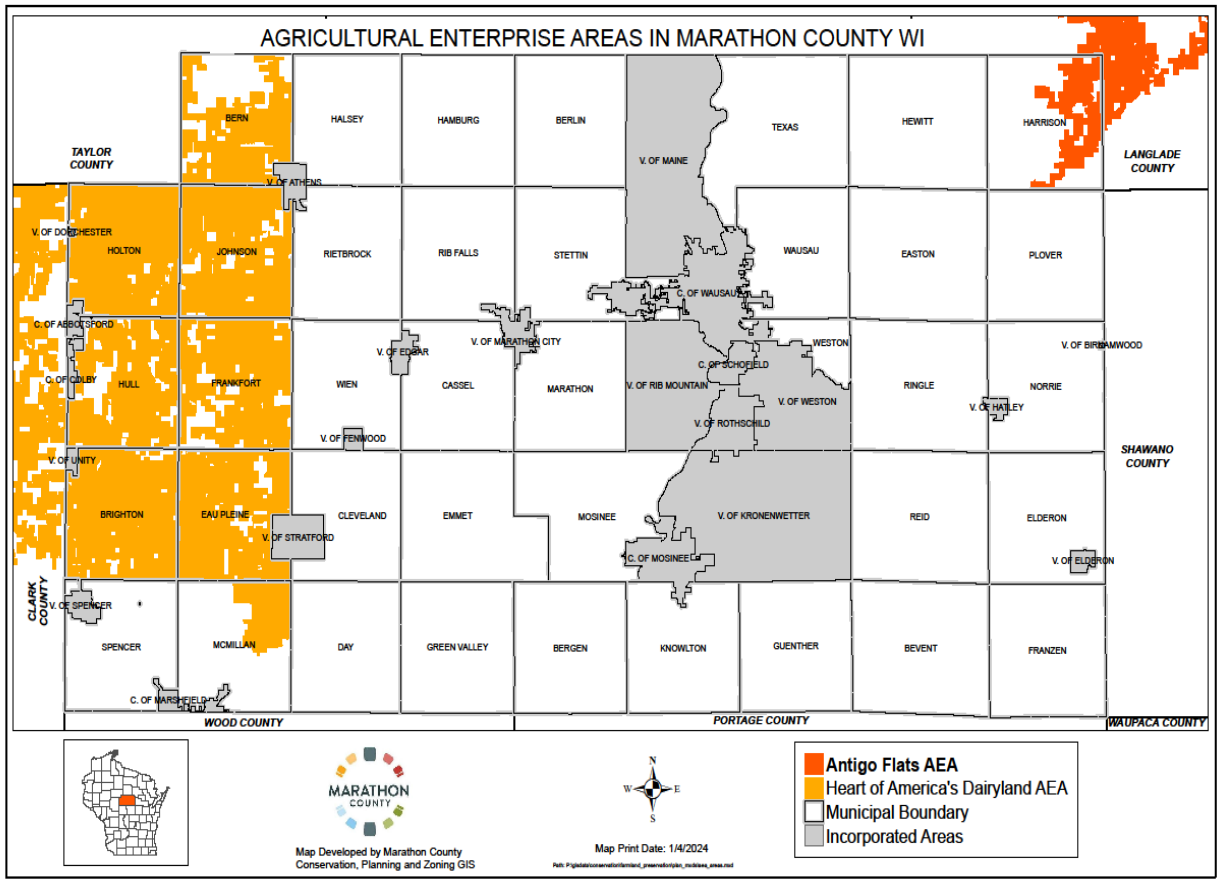
through a process that rezones the property into a different zoning district. The strategy does not restrict development to less productive locations, require a minimum term length, or limit the number of land divisions or acreage eligible for rezone to another district. Not allowing nonagricultural development in the Farmland Preservation Zoning district meets DATCP requirements of a maximum conversion rate of 1:20 within the Farmland Preservation Zoning district. Map 8-1 shows the zoning status of the political subdivisions in Marathon County and the Towns with Farmland Preservation Zoning districts.



Map 8-1: Zoning Status of Marathon County

Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs)

An Agricultural Enterprise Area is a designated area of contiguous land devoted primarily to agricultural use and locally targeted for agricultural preservation and agricultural development. AEAs preserve areas considered most valuable for current and future agricultural use, promote the development of agricultural businesses, and provide eligibility to agricultural landowners for tax credits through Farmland Preservation Agreements. Marathon County supports the focused development of agricultural enterprises in these areas, will work to minimize incompatible development through implementation of the land use policies in this Plan, and will ensure that its other actions within AEAs are compatible with this designation. The County also supports the expansion of existing AEAs and the creation of additional AEAs where consistent with this Plan, and where there is sufficient town government and landowner initiative to expand or create an AEA. Proposed AEAs must meet the criteria identified in Chapter 91.84, WI Statutes. Map 8-2 shows the current AEA's in Marathon County.



Map 8-2: Agricultural Enterprise Areas in Marathon County

Farmland Preservation Agreements

A Farmland Preservation Agreement is a 10-year contract between an eligible landowner and the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, to keep covered land in agricultural or agricultural accessory use and to meet State Soil and Water Conservation Standards and Agricultural Prohibitions. In return, the landowner may claim an annual Farmland Preservation tax credit. (See Farmland Preservation Tax Credits section below for more details.) To enter into a Farmland Preservation Agreement, the land must also be located within and Agricultural Enterprise Area.

Landowner Incentives

The potential profitability of farming varies with seasonal weather fluctuations, commodity prices, farm sizes and types, and many other factors. At the same time, farmers and agricultural landowners control much of the land in Marathon County, and have some alternative means of profiting from that land via housing and other nonagricultural development. An overall farmland preservation strategy that includes financial incentives as one component can serve to counteract this pressure to convert farmland. Figure 8-1 represents the spatial relationship of farmland preservation strategies and landowner incentives.

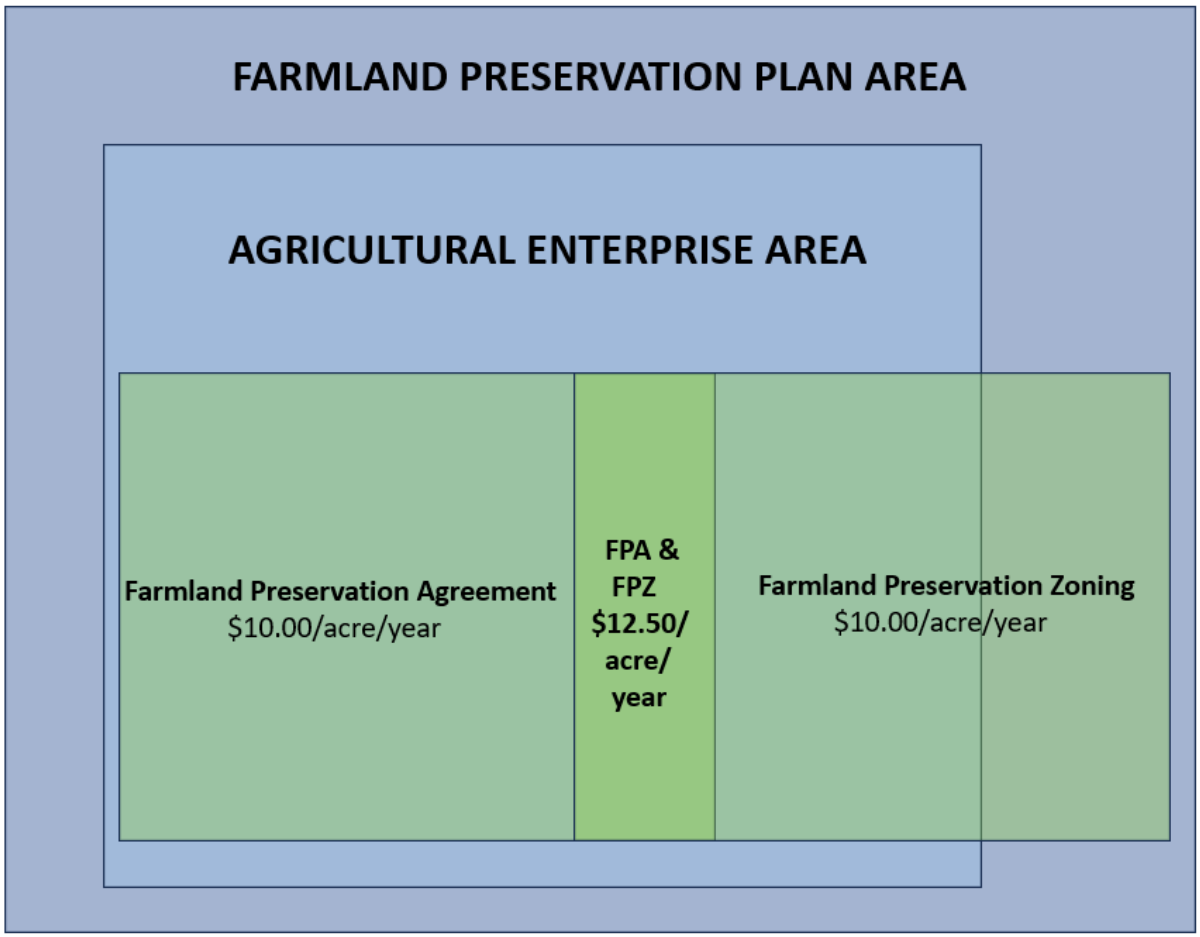


Figure 8-1: Spatial Relationship of Farmland Preservation Strategies and Incentives

Farmland Preservation Tax Credits

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program provides the opportunity for landowners within areas planned for farmland preservation to claim annual Farmland Preservation income tax credits. The tax credit is a sum sufficient appropriation, and the State is obligated to pay out all valid tax credit claims for any given tax year. Claimants must: 1) Own land in an area planned for Farmland Preservation, and zoned for Farmland Preservation and/or designated as an Agricultural Enterprise Area. 2) Have $6,000 in gross farm revenue (including rental revenue) in the past year or $18,000 over the past three years. 3) Meet State Soil and Water Conservation Standards and Agricultural Prohibitions on all land owned. Eligible landowners may receive the following annual income tax credits:

- $10.00 per acre for qualifying land that is in a Farmland Preservation Zoning district.
- $10.00 per acre for qualifying land that is subject to a Farmland Preservation Agreement.
- $12.50 per acre for qualifying land that is both in a Farmland Preservation Zoning district and subject to a Farmland Preservation Agreement.

Marathon County supports this tax credit as a key incentive tool for Farmland Preservation.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE 2024 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

MARATHON COUNTY
CONSERVATION, PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

for the

2024 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan
Public Participation Plan

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Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan
Public Participation Plan

Prepared for:

Marathon County Citizens
Marathon County Executive Committee,
Marathon County Board of Supervisors,
and
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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MARATHON COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Marathon County's Public Participation Plan forms the basic framework for achieving an interactive dialogue between local decision makers, County staff, key stakeholders and the citizens of Marathon County. As Marathon County seeks to be a preferred place to live, work, visit and do business – a greater level of public involvement is necessary to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are clearly understood and incorporated into the plan. The public participation procedures must provide for a broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, public meetings after effective notice, opportunity for written comments, communications programs, information services, provision for open discussion and consideration of and response to public comments.

Marathon County will develop a Farmland Preservation Plan in accordance with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection guidelines. The following Public Participation Plan has been developed by the Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department (CPZ) to foster internal and external input from various county officials, county staff, town officials and local landowners and residents.

OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The following levels of public involvement identify the general public and governmental interaction in order to achieve specific outcomes and objectives in terms of promoting public awareness, education, input, interaction and partnership that Marathon County would like to implement throughout the development of the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Internal Input Process

Environmental Resources Committee (ERC): The ERC has the responsibility of providing oversight to staff and approval of the Farmland Preservation Plan.

CPZ staff: CPZ staff will provide expertise, data, data analysis, studies, and mapping, to support the ERC. The Conservation Program Manager will assist the staff and ERC in identifying opportunities, assets, challenges and trends, policy options, and action step options. The Conservation Program Manager will be supported by CPZ's Director.

External (Public) Input Process

Marathon County will foster public participation through the efforts as identified by the following:

Community opinion: Public awareness, public education, and public input and interaction meetings will be conducted to ensure public participation.

During the county-wide Farmland Preservation Plan update process, public meetings will be held at one or more public locations central and convenient to all citizens of Marathon County. Staff will present and inform towns at the Eastern and Western Towns Association meetings.

Website: Public participation activities will be used such as the County's website to inform and receive input from landowners that may not be able to attend these public meetings and hearings. All information prepared as part of this planning process will be posted. A comment area will also be included to seek citizen input.

Public meetings: Four public meeting sessions will be held with local governments, plan commissions, general public, and other groups in the county. These will be held at local Marathon County facility locations or other public facilities throughout the county.

Public Meeting – Session 1 (Inform):

PUBLIC INPUT AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (ERC)

The purpose of the first public meeting is to inform the general public, local governments and various groups. The public participation goal is to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the Farmland Preservation Plan update, the Farmland Preservation Program, and Farmland Preservation Zoning.

Prior to the public meeting session 1 (inform), town chairs and clerks will be emailed copies of their respective Farmland Preservation Plan map and proposed Farmland Preservation Plan for their review.

CPZ will announce an open house informational meeting to town chairs and clerks and to receive public input. A flyer will be created for the open-house informational meeting for town officials and will be mailed to all town boards and clerks. The open house meeting dates and location will be provided to all town chairs and clerks.

Public Meeting – Session 2 (Consult):

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL

The ERC will provide additional public input opportunity regarding the update of the Plan and map creation. The intent of the second round of public meetings is to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions confronting Marathon County.

Public Meeting – Session 3 (Consult):

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL

The ERC will provide additional public input opportunity regarding the update of the Plan and map creation. The intent of the third round of public meetings is to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions confronting Marathon County. A public hearing by ERC will approve the draft Farmland Preservation Plan to be released to DATCP for review and favorable consideration.

Meeting/Hearing Notices (General Process)

Meeting Notices: Official meeting notices will be prepared for any public meeting or hearing conducted pertaining to the countywide Farmland Preservation Plan update process. All public hearings held by the County and local plan commissions must comply with applicable notice requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. At a minimum, the requirements of Section 19.31 pertaining to public meetings and notification will be met.

Hearing Notices: Marathon County will place legal notices of hearings in the County's official newspaper, currently the Wausau Daily Herald. Hearing notices will also be placed in other local newspapers throughout the county as related to the geographic area affected. These may include but are not limited to the Record Review, Wausau City Pages, Wittenberg Enterprise & Birnamwood News, and Marshfield News Herald. Hearing notices will be published as required by state law and county/municipality policy.

Farmland Preservation Plan Adoption Process

PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN.

Marathon County shall comply with DATCP procedures in order to fulfill the approval process before the Farmland Preservation Plan may take effect:

1. ERC approval to release to DATCP for approval.
2. Staff to email the Farmland Preservation Plan and required attachments to DATCP for approval.
3. DATCP approval and certification of the Plan.

4. ERC public hearing to approve the Plan and forward to Marathon County Board for consideration.
5. Marathon County Board approval.

APPENDIX B: MARATHON COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION SURVEY REPORT, 2013

UW Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
River Falls
GLOBAL. INNOVATIVE. EXCELLENT.

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey Report, 2013

James Janke
David Trechter
Shelly Hadley

Survey Research Center Report 2013/17
July 2013

Staff and students working for the Survey Research Center at UW-River Falls were instrumental in the completion of this study. We would like to thank Denise Parks, Erin Ingli, Caleb Riedeman, Rosie Krum, and Jessica Mueller. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and dedication. The SRC would also like to thank Diane Wessel of the Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning for her valuable assistance throughout the project. Finally, we would like to thank the Marathon County residents and agricultural stakeholders who took the time to complete their questionnaires.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather opinions with respect to farmland preservation and agricultural issues in Marathon County. County officials identified two populations to include in the survey: agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The questionnaires for these two populations were very similar. The primary difference was the addition of several questions on the agriculture stakeholder version.

In May 2013, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to a random sample of 1,149 Marathon County households and to the entire list of 745 agricultural stakeholders provided by Marathon County officials. The response rate from agricultural stakeholders was 45 percent (338 completed returns). The response rate from the general public was 40 percent (462 completed returns). The results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 3.9 percent with 95 percent confidence for the agricultural stakeholders and plus/minus 4.6 percent with 95 percent confidence for the general public.

The first group of questions was included only on the agricultural stakeholder version and asked about agricultural resources in Marathon County. A majority of agricultural stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that parcel fragmentation and the cost of farmland are negatively impacting farming in the County. About half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the need to increase the availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities. Nearly half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could find productive farmland to rent or buy. Nearly half disagreed or strongly disagreed that finding land for manure spreading is difficult.

Respondents had mixed opinions about the adequacy of the County's road network for agricultural needs over the next 20 years and about the future availability of productive farmland. With respect to the need for more farm support services (parts, repairs, and processing), there was no majority opinion; however, the largest proportion, about four in ten, agreed, strongly agreed, which may suggest a desire for more options.

Next, agricultural stakeholders were asked to rate the importance of programs and policies. A majority said voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture are high or very high priorities and half said financial incentives for farmland preservation are a high or very high priority. About four in ten said regulations to keep land in agriculture are a high or very high priority. Respondents had mixed opinions about the priority of cost share programs for conservation practices and policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers, agricultural processing businesses and agricultural supply retailers. Programs to train agricultural managers were seen as a high or very high priority by about one in four respondents.

The remaining questions in the survey were asked both of agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Interestingly, there were few differences of opinion between agricultural and non-agricultural respondents.

Half of respondents gave high or very high priority ratings to increasing accessibility to locally grown food and programs supporting agricultural economic development. Respondents had mixed opinions about the importance increasing the capacity of roads to support large machinery equipment and about enforcing regulations on large machinery and equipment on roads.

Half or more of respondents said increasing both agricultural regulations and increasing non-agricultural regulations is a low or very low priority. Neither group of respondents favor reducing the current level of regulations either on agricultural operations or non-agricultural activities.

Respondents overwhelmingly favored paying for increasing the capacity of roads to support large machinery equipment by user fees rather than the County levy.

When asked to rank a group of five policies, the top priority was to protect groundwater. Protecting surface water quality ranked second, followed by using conservation practices to protect soil productivity, protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners, and directing development to areas of existing development.

Half of respondents favor or strongly favor using farmland preservation zoning. The largest portion of respondents favored creating Agricultural Enterprise Areas, but the percentage was less than half (44%).

More than seven in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that rural development should be concentrated in or near areas already developed. Similarly, over 70 percent agrreed or strongly agreed that if development does occur in areas away from existing development, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.

Six in ten respondents prefer a cluster design, which preserves more open space by reducing and clumping lots, for rural subdivisions.

Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather opinions from Marathon County agricultural stakeholders and the general public with respect to farmland preservation and agricultural issues in Marathon County. The County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to collect these data and analyze the results.

Survey Methods

Marathon County officials identified two populations to include in the survey. The first group was agricultural stakeholders, for which County officials provided a mailing list of 745. The second population consisted of the general public in Marathon County. The SRC drew a random sample of households from this area.

The survey instruments for the two populations were very similar. The primary difference was the addition of several questions on the agricultural stakeholder version that addressed topics and issues specific to farm operations and businesses.

In May 2013, the SRC mailed surveys to 1,149 randomly selected residential addresses ("general public") and to all 745 names on the agricultural stakeholder list. The surveys were followed at roughly 14-day intervals with reminder postcards and a second mailing to non-respondents. The response rate from agricultural stakeholders was 45 percent (338 completed returns). The response rate from the general public was 40 percent (462 completed returns). The results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 3.9 percent with 95 percent confidence for the agricultural stakeholders and plus/minus 4.6 percent with 95 percent confidence for the general public.

The responses from the two populations are compiled as one set of data throughout the report. The SRC used analytical tests to compare the responses of the agricultural stakeholders and the general public on questions common to both versions. Unless otherwise noted in this report, the responses of the general public and agricultural stakeholders align with each other. The report will identify instances when there were notable differences between the responses of the agricultural stakeholders and the general public.

Any survey has to be concerned with "non-response bias." Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the SRC concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this study.**

A small number of questions contained an optional "other" option in which the respondent could provide an answer. In addition, the agricultural stakeholder version had a comment box for respondents to add comments about farmland preservation. **These written responses are contained in Appendix B.**

Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question containing the combined responses from agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Appendix D contains the agricultural stakeholder tabulation, and

Appendix E contains the general public tabulation. All appendices include the "no opinion" responses.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1a (page 6) and Table 1b (page 7) summarize the demographic profile of the general public and the agricultural stakeholder samples. The SRC utilized the 1-year estimates from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) to compare the demographic profile of respondents to the overall profile of all adults in Marathon County.

General Public Sample. The general public sample very closely matches the employment status and the percentage of households with children in the overall population of the County. The general public sample contains slightly more respondents who have some college education or who had completed a technical college program.

Among the general public respondents, there are fewer people age18 to 34 and fewer renters than would be expected. Our experience is that younger residents and renters in most jurisdictions are less likely to participate in surveys. The report will describe the relatively small number of instances where there are noteworthy differences in the response pattern between older and younger respondents and between homeowners and renters.

With respect to household income, there were fewer low-income households (<$25,000/year) among the general public sample and slightly more in the $50,000 to $74,999 range.

However, there were substantially more men in the general public sample (70%) than in the overall rural population (50%). The analysis found statistically significant differences in the response pattern of men compared to women in 12 of the 45 variables on the survey. Further analysis showed that there were only 5 variables in which the magnitude of the difference were large enough to be noteworthy. These will be identified and described in the body of the report.

Overall, the SRC is comfortable with the overall representativeness of the general public sample.

Table 1a. Demographic Profile of Respondents							
Gender (Age 18+)	**Count**	**Male**	**Female**				
Ag Stakeholder sample	323	88%	12%				
Public sample	443	70%	30%				
Census (ACS)	102,254	50%	50%				
Age 18+	**Count**	**18 – 24**	**25 – 34**	**35 – 44**	**45 – 54**	**55 – 64**	**65+**
Ag Stakeholder sample	324	0%	3%	11%	28%	30%	27%
Public sample	446	1%	9%	14%	21%	23%	31%
Census (ACS)	102,254	10%	17%	17%	20%	17%	19%
Employment Status (16+)	**Count**	**Full-Time**	**Part-Time**	**Self**	**Unemp.**	**Retired**	**Other**
Ag Stakeholder sample	324	22%	56%	7%	1%	13%	1%
Public sample	453	48%	9%	4%	1%	35%	2%
Census (ACS)	106,485	60%[1]		4%	6%	31%[2]	
Highest Level of Education	**Count**	**Less than High Sch.**	**High Sch. Diploma**	**Some College/ Tech**	**Tech/ College Grad.**	**Bachelor Degree**	**Graduate/ Profess. Degree**
Ag Stakeholder sample	325	10%	35%	29%	14%	8%	3%
Public sample	455	4%	25%	27%	16%	19%	8%
Census (ACS) (Age 25+)	91,980	10%	40%	16%	11%	16%	7%
Households with Children	**Count**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5+**
Ag Stakeholder sample	330	73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%
Public sample	454	75%	8%	11%	4%	1%	0%
Census (ACS)	53,343	71%	29%				
Residential Status	**Count**	**Own**	**Rent**				
Ag Stakeholder sample	329	99%	1%				
Public sample	458	90%	10%				
Census (ACS)	53,343	73%	27%				
Household Income	**Count**	**Less than $25,000**	**$25,000 – $34,999**	**$35,000 - $49,999**	**$50,000 - $74,999**	**$75,000 - $99,999**	**$100,000+**
Ag Stakeholder sample	294	14%	27%	16%	16%	13%	15%
Public sample	422	14%	14%	16%	27%	14%	15%
Census (ACS)	53,343	23%	10%	15%	22%	13%	18%

[1] Census does not differentiate between full time and part time employment
[2] Includes all persons age 16 years and older who are not in the workforce

Agricultural Stakeholder Sample. The SRC did not have demographic information about the 745 agricultural stakeholders in the mailing list provided by Marathon County officials and was unable to compare the demographic profile of the agricultural stakeholder respondents to the overall list. The following is a summary of the demographics provided by the agricultural stakeholder respondents.

- 47 percent have gross annual farm income over $100,000
- 52 percent have farm operations between 150 acres and 500 acres in size
- 67 percent both own and rent crop land
- 49 percent receive at least three-fourths of their total household income from farming
- 42 percent participate in farmland preservation programs
- 61 percent do not anticipate transferring ownership of their farmland for at least 10 years

Table 1b. Farm-Related Characteristics of Agricultural Stakeholder Sample

Type of farm	Count	Retirement farm	Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)	Farm occupation (<$100K gross)	Farm Occupation ($100K-$250K gross)	Large commercial farm ($250K-$500K gross)	Very large commercial (>$500K gross)
Ag Stakeholder sample	315	13%	17%	23%	29%	11%	7%

Acres Operated	Count	40	40-150	150-500	500-1000	1000+	
Ag Stakeholder sample	316	5%	27%	52%	10%	6%	

Percentage Rented	Count	0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%	
Ag Stakeholder sample	319	33%	29%	19%	11%	9%	

Household Income from Farming	Count	0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%	
Ag Stakeholder sample	319	6%	19%	12%	13%	49%	

Participation in farmland preservation programs	Count	Yes	No				
Ag Stakeholder sample	322	42%	58%				

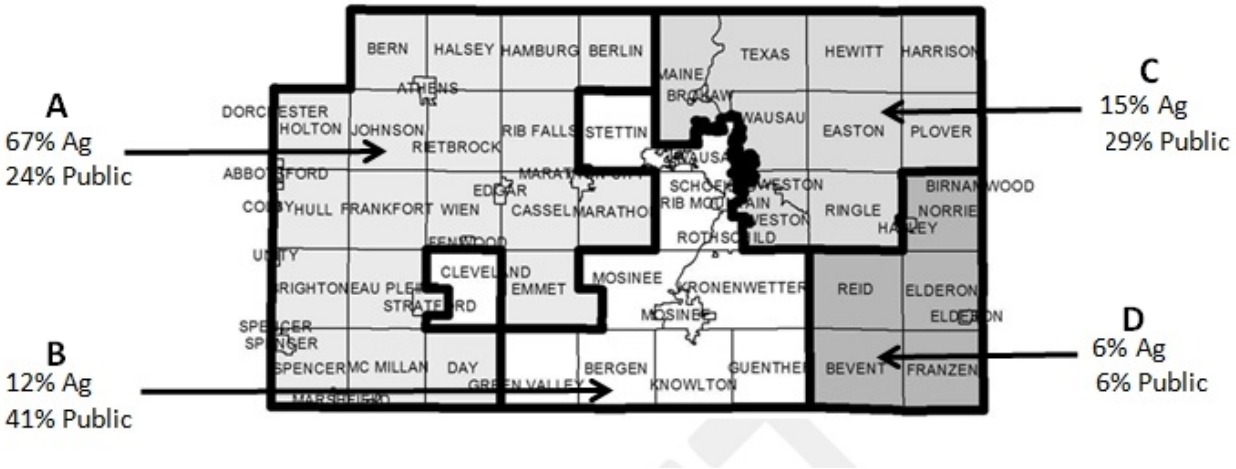
Anticipated transfer of ownership	Count	< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.		
Ag Stakeholder sample	312	16%	23%	31%	30%		

Place of Residents of Respondents. The survey included a map of Marathon County divided into four areas marked A, B, C, and D. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the four areas contains their place of residence. The results are shown in Map 1.

Two thirds of the agricultural stakeholder responses came from area A, followed by 15 percent from area C, 12 percent from area B, and 6 percent from area D.

Area B was the home to 41 percent of the general public respondents, followed by 29 percent from area C, 24 percent from area A, and 6 percent from area D.

Map 1. Place of Residence of Respondents by Area

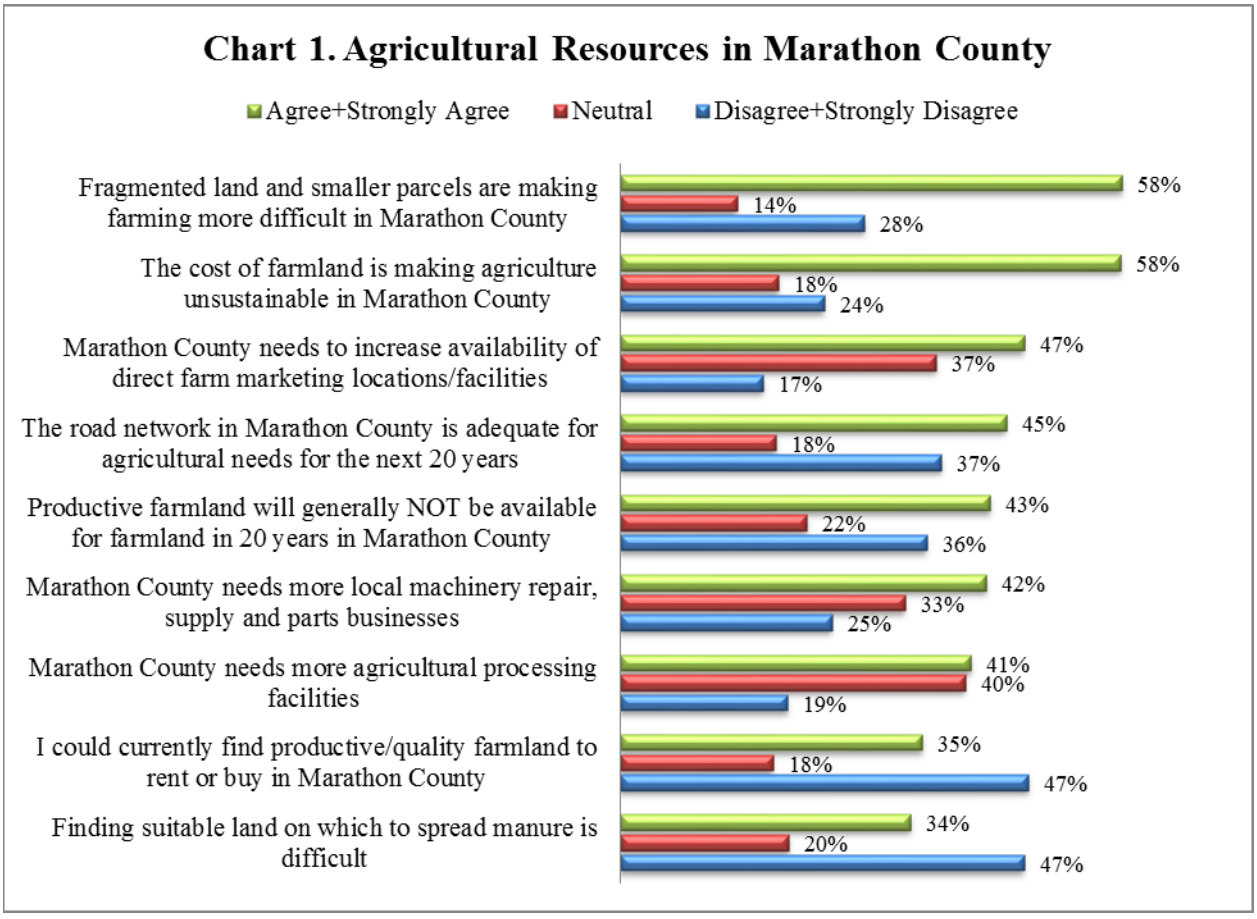


Agricultural Resources in Marathon County

Agricultural stakeholders were asked their level of agreement with nine statements. The answer choices were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," "strongly disagree," and "no opinion." The results are shown in Chart1. The top bar is the combined percentage of strongly agree and agree responses, the middle bar represents the neutral responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the strongly disagree and disagree responses. Among this group of questions, only about 5 percent of respondents said they had no opinion. These responses were excluded from the analysis. This group of questions was only asked on the agricultural stakeholder version.

The strongest opinions were with respect to farmland fragmentation and the cost of farmland. About six in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that parcel fragmentation is making farming more difficult and that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable. At the same time, about half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could find productive farmland to rent or buy in the County and that finding land for manure spreading is difficult.

When asked about increasing the availability of direct farm marketing locations and facilities, half agreed or strongly agreed. Over a third had a neutral opinion. As will be noted later in the report, the general public places a greater level of importance to increased access of locally grown food.



Respondents had mixed opinions about the adequacy of the road network for agricultural needs over the next 20 years. Slightly less than half agreed or strongly agreed that it would be adequate, but 37 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Respondents also had mixed opinions about the future availability of productive farmland in the County. About four in ten agreed or strongly agreed that productive farmland will generally be available in 20 years, but nearly as many (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When it comes to the need for more local businesses for machinery repair, supply and parts, there was no majority opinion. However, the largest percentage (a plurality of 42%) agreed or strongly agreed, and a third of respondents were neutral. Similarly, there was no majority opinion with respect to the need for more agricultural processing facilities; the largest percentage agreed or strongly agreed (41%) or were neutral (40%). This plurality may suggest a desire for more options among a sizeable portion of the agriculture stakeholder population.

Demographic Comparisons Among Agricultural Stakeholders.

Respondents who participate in the farmland preservation programs were more likely to rate the following as high or very high priorities: cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices, financial incentives to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation, regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years

A higher proportion of women strongly agree that productive farmland will not be available in 20 years.

Agricultural stakeholders less than age 45 were more likely to strongly agree that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County.

Respondents with annual household incomes above $50,000 were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they could find productive farmland to buy or rent. Conversely, higher income agricultural stakeholders were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that productive farmland will not be available in 20 years. A higher proportion of respondents with annual household incomes below $50,000 agreed or strongly agreed that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable.

Respondents from area D (see Map 1) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult. A larger percentage of respondents from area C and D agreed or strongly agreed that Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities.

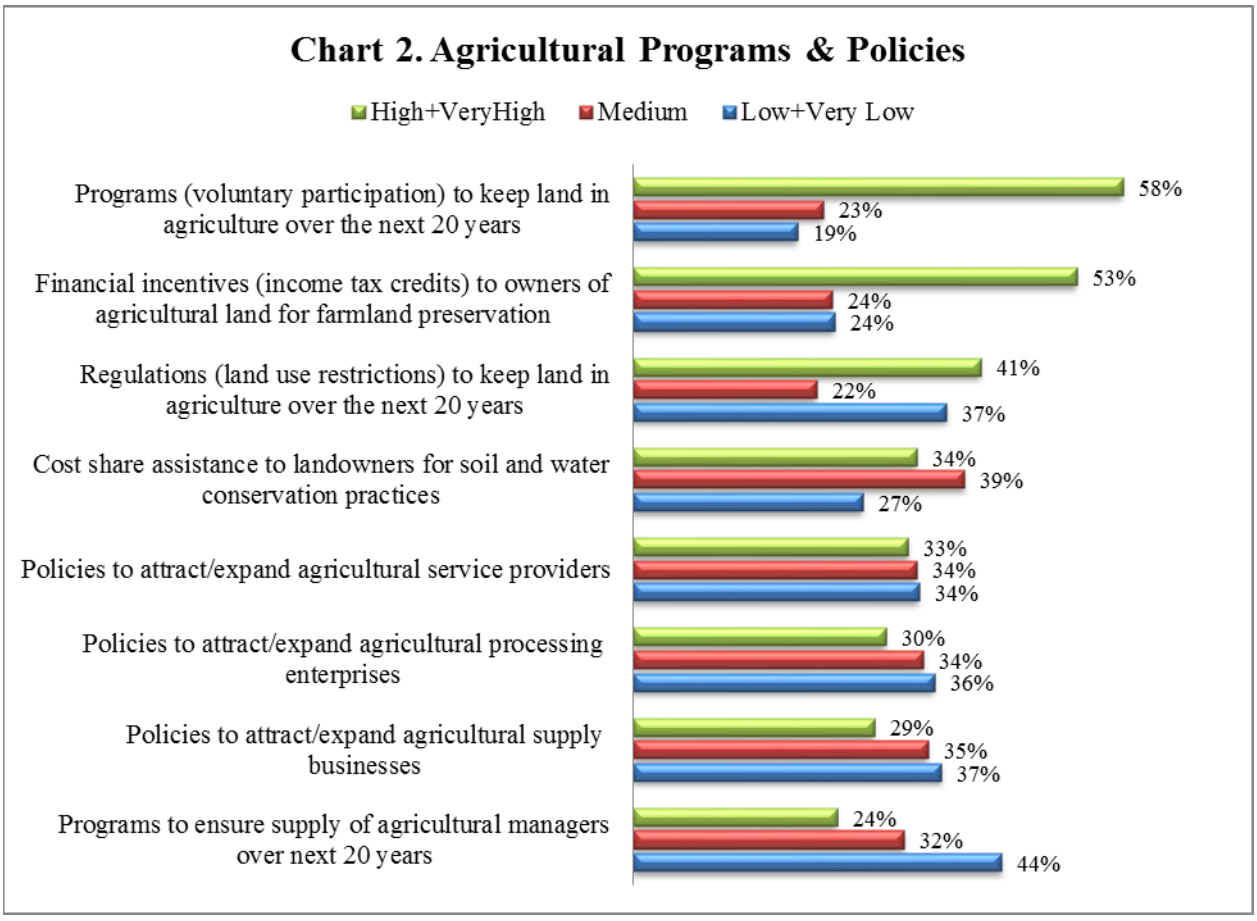
Agricultural stakeholders were asked to rate the priority of eight programs and policies. The answer choices were "very high," "high," "medium," "low," "very low," and "no opinion." The results are shown in Chart 2. The top bar is the combined percentage of very high and high responses, the middle bar represents the medium responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the low and very low responses. Among this group of questions, the percentage of no opinion responses was in the single digits. These responses were excluded from the analysis. This group of questions was only asked on the agriculture stakeholder survey instrument.

The highest priority ratings went to voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture, with about six in ten respondents saying this was a high or very high priority. However, when asked about regulations to keep land in agriculture, only about four in ten said it was a high or very high priority and nearly as many said it was a low or very low priority.

Half of respondents said financial incentives to landowners who preserve farmland are high or very high priorities and an additional 25 percent said financial incentives are a medium priority.

Cost share programs for conservation were rated somewhat lower in priority, with about four in ten respondents saying these programs are a medium priority, and a third rating them as high or very high.

Respondents had mixed opinions about the priority of policies to attract agricultural service providers, agricultural processing businesses, and agricultural supply retailers. With respect to attracting or expanding agricultural service providers, about a third said this is high or very high priority, a third rated it a medium priority, and a third rated it as a low or very low priority.



Respondents said policies to encourage more agricultural processors and supply businesses were slightly lower in priority than attracting service providers. About 30 percent of respondents said these are high or very high priorities, but about 35 percent rated them as medium and about 37 percent said they are low or very low priorities.

Programs to ensure a supply of agricultural managers received the lowest priority ratings among the programs and policies listed in this question. The largest percentage (44%) said these are low or very low priorities. Only a quarter of respondents said these are high or very high priorities, while a third rated them as medium priorities.

Demographic Comparisons Among Agricultural Stakeholders.

Women were more likely to feel that a program of financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation is a very high priority.

Respondents age 45 and older were more likely to say that cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices is a very high or high priority.

Larger majorities of households without children said voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture and financial incentives for farmland preservation are very high or high priorities.

Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to say that the following are high or very high priorities: cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices, financial incentives to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation, and regulations to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years.

A smaller percentage of respondents from area A(see Map 1) said policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses are a high or very high priority.

Additional Comments

The agricultural stakeholder version contained an open-ended question in which respondents could add comments and suggestions about programs, incentives, regulations, support, etc. that Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland. Fifty-one respondents added comments, and the SRC placed those comments into 4 categories plus a miscellaneous group. Some comments contained multiple topics, and were split into their appropriate topical groups, resulting in 55 comments. They are summarized in Table 2. Appendix B contains the complete list of comments.

Table 2. Comments by Topic – Agricultural Stakeholders

Topic	Count	%
Government Regulations and Taxes	19	35%
Farm Size	16	29%
Farmland Preservation Tools	9	16%
Environment and Natural Resources	7	13%
Miscellaneous	4	7%
Total	55	100%

The most frequent comments were about government regulation and taxes, which comprised about a third of the comments. The following quotes are examples of comments about regulations and taxes.

"Don't over regulate and make it a county that nobody wants to farm in."

"Every program costs the taxpayer more money and we can't afford it anymore!"

Comments about farm size were the second most frequent topic area, with 29 percent of the total. The following quotes illustrate the common theme of these comments.

"Limit the size of large farms or CAFO's and where they can be located..."

"The county should not give support to factory farms. They are buying land all the time. Labor comes from outside the area. We cannot compete with this."

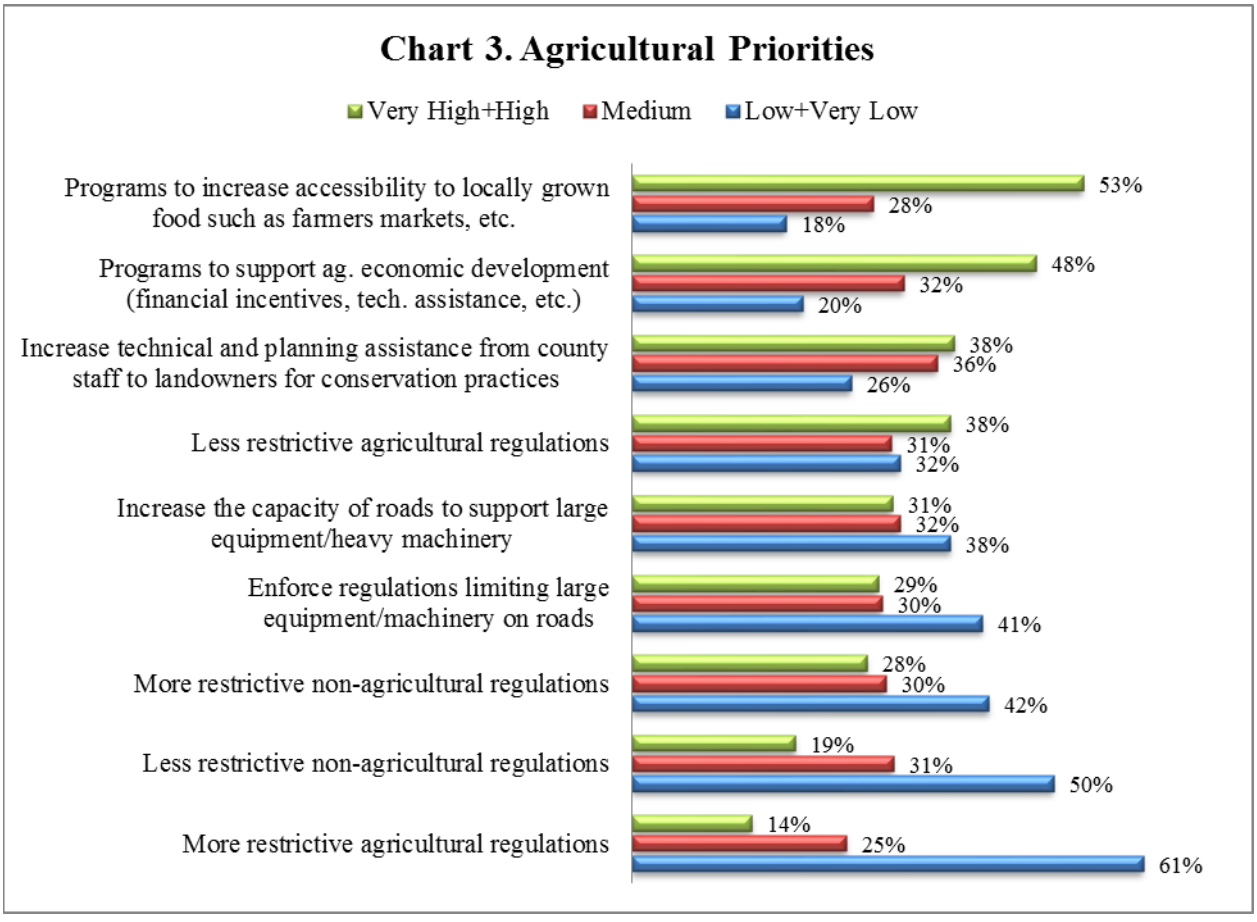
Priority Programs

The remaining questions on the survey were included both on the agricultural stakeholder version and the general public version of the survey.

The general public and agricultural stakeholders were asked to assign a priority rating to nine programs or regulations. The answer choices were "very high," "high," "medium," "low," "very low," and "no opinion." The results are shown in Chart 3. The top bar is the combined percentage of very high and high responses, the middle bar represents the medium responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the low and very low responses. Among this group of questions, the percentage of no opinion responses was in the single digits for seven of the nine questions. These responses were excluded from the analysis.

The highest priority ratings went to programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food (farmer's markets, etc.) and to programs supporting economic development related to agriculture such as financial incentives, technical assistance and low-interest loans. About half of respondents said these are very high or high priority programs, and about one in three said they are a medium priority.

Increasing the availability of technical and planning assistance to landowners for conservation practices were rated somewhat lower in priority. Compared to the top rated priorities, the percentage who said increasing this assistance is a high or very high priority dropped to 38 percent, while the medium ratings increased to 36 percent.



Respondents had mixed opinions about the importance of increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment and heavy machinery. About a third of respondents said this was a high or very high priority, and an additional third said it was a medium priority. However, nearly 40 percent of respondents said it is a low or very low priority. A similar question about the importance of enforcing regulations on large equipment on roads drew nearly the same response. About 40 percent rated enforcement as a low or very low priority.

When asked about changes in regulations affecting agriculture, over 60 percent of respondents said more restrictive regulations are a low or very low priority. At the same time, only 38 percent said reducing the regulations was a high or very high priority. Taken together, the results of these two questions do not indicate a mandate in either direction. An additional pair of questions was asked about changes in non-agriculture regulations, and the pattern of results was similar. Half of respondents said less restrictive non-agricultural regulations were a low or very low priorities, while only 28 percent said more restrictive non-agricultural regulations were high or very high priorities.

Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Within this group of questions, the differences in the response patterns between agricultural stakeholders and the general public tended to be a matter of degree and did not impact the overall interpretation of the data. The exception is with respect to the importance of increasing accessibility to locally grown food. In this instance, two-thirds of the general public rated this as a high or very high priority. In comparison, only third of agricultural stakeholders said this is a high or very high priority.

Demographic Comparisons. A larger proportion of women rated the following as high priorities: to increase the accessibility of locally grown food, to support agricultural economic development, and to increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices.

Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to rate programs to support agricultural economic development as high or very high priorities.

A larger proportion of retirees said increasing technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices and enforcement of regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads are high priorities.

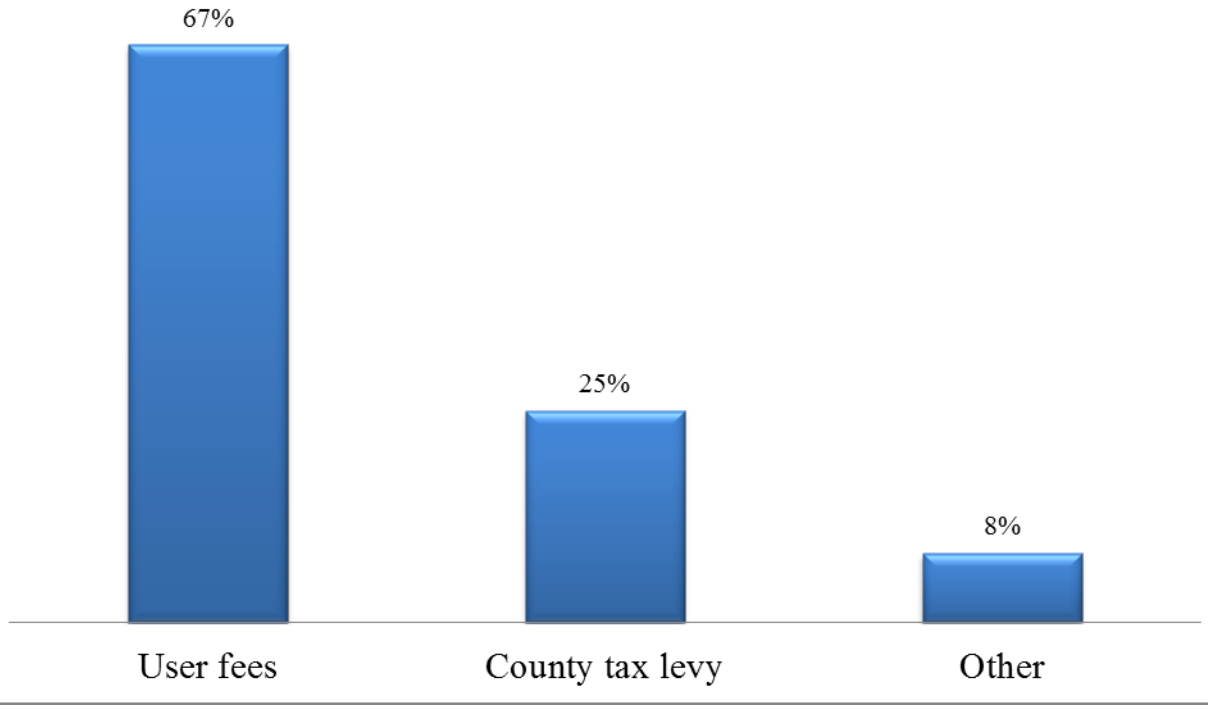
Respondents with post-secondary education were more likely to say that less restrictive agricultural regulations are low high or very low priorities.

A higher proportion of renters said increasing access to local food and increasing technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices are very high or high priorities.

General public respondents who live in area B and area C of the County (see Map 1) were more likely to believe that programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food and programs to support agricultural economic development are high or very high priorities.

A follow-up question asked respondents who gave high or very high priority ratings to increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment how to pay for it. As shown in Chart 4, respondents heavily favored user fees rather than the County tax levy.

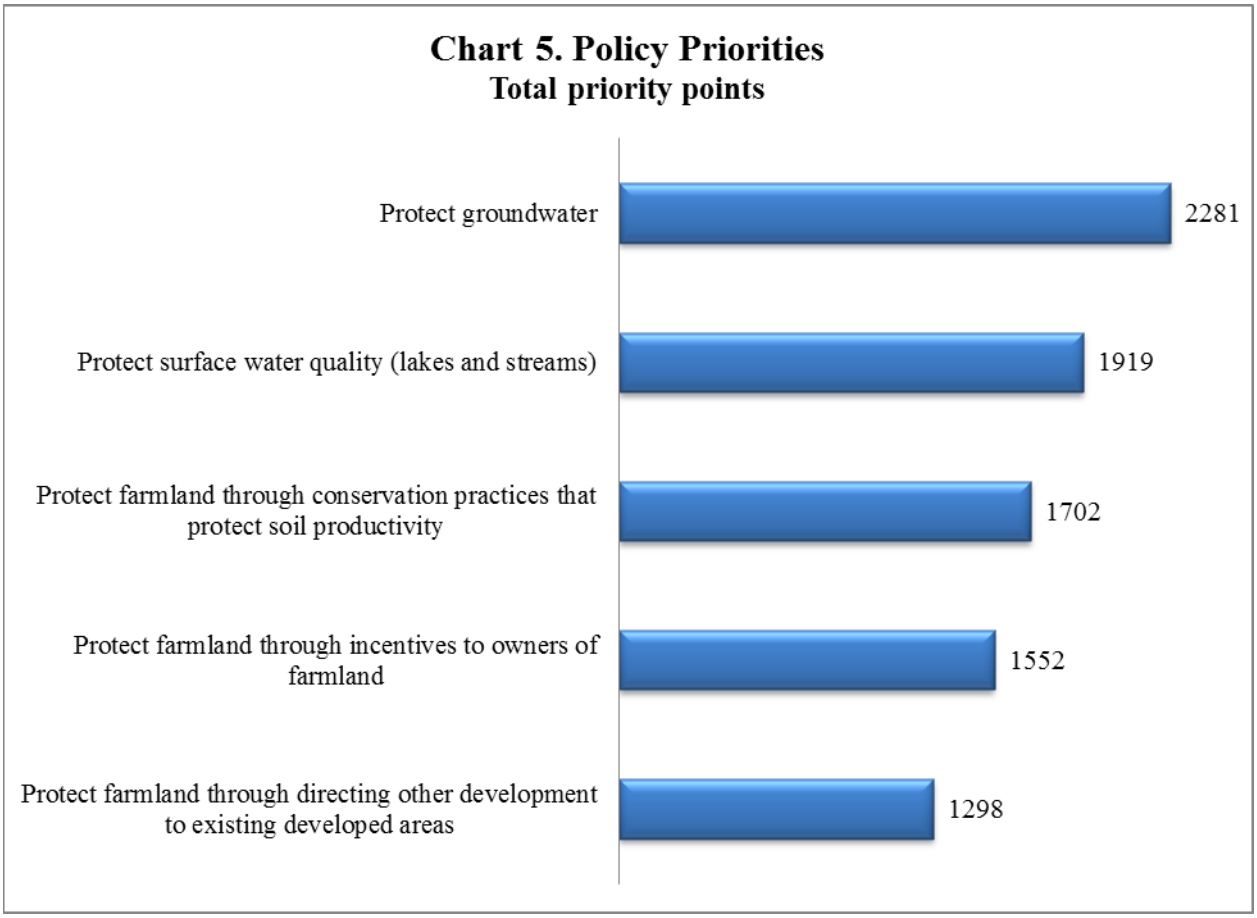
Chart 4. Funding to Increase the Capacity of Roads for Large Equipment



Comparison between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Again, the difference was a matter of degree. Majorities of both groups favored user fees; the majority was larger among the general public.

Demographic Comparisons. There were no differences among the demographic groups.

Agricultural stakeholders and rural residents were asked to rank their top four policy priorities from a list of five policies related to agriculture and planning. The SRC assigned four points to each respondent's top priority, three points to the second priority, two points to the third priority and one point to the fourth priority. The results are shown in Chart 5 and indicate that the protection of groundwater and surface water are the top priorities from the list. Protecting soil productivity through conservation practices ranked third, followed by protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners and protecting farmland by directing development to areas of existing development.



Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Agricultural stakeholders and the general public had differing rank orders for the five items. Agricultural stakeholders gave more priority ranking points to protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners, to protecting farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas, and to protecting farmland though conservation practices that protect soil productivity. The general public gave more priority ranking points to protecting groundwater and surface water quality. It is important to note that this question addresses only the relative priority of the policies included in the question to each other. Assigning fewer priority points to a particular policy or group of policies does not necessarily mean that respondents believe those policies are unimportant.

Demographic Comparisons. Retirees were more likely to give higher priority rankings to the three environmentally related choices on this list: protecting farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity, protecting surface water quality, and protecting groundwater.

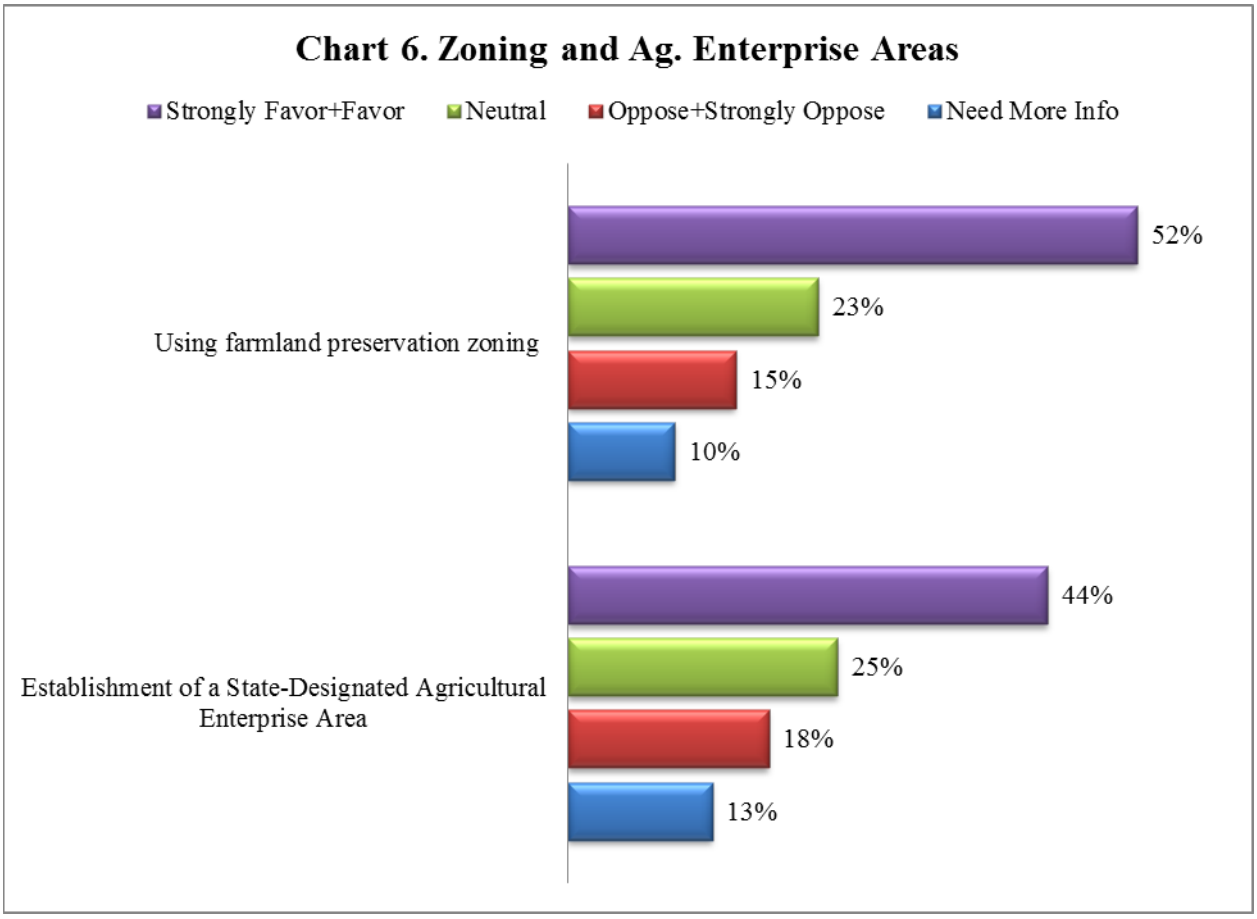
Respondents without children in their households were more likely to give a higher priority ranking to protecting farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity.

Farmland Preservation Tools

Agricultural stakeholders and the general public were asked if they favor using farmland preservation zoning in the County and establishing Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA). Respondents were given brief descriptions of what these policies entail. The answer choices were "strongly favor," "favor," "neutral," "oppose," "strongly oppose," and "need more information." The results are shown in Chart 6. The top bar is the combined percentage of favor and strongly favor responses, the second bar represents the neutral responses, the third bar is the sum of the oppose and strongly oppose responses, and the bottom bar represents those who need more information.

Half of respondents favored or strongly favored using farmland preservation zoning, while 15 percent opposed or strongly opposed this type of zoning. About a third said they are either neutral (23%) or need more information (10%).

There was no majority opinion with respect to creating Agriculture Enterprise Areas; however the largest percentage said they favored or strongly favored designating AEAs (44%). As was the case with farmland preservation zoning, the percentage of respondents who oppose or strongly oppose AEA was relatively small (18%).



Comparisions between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The responses of agricultural stakeholders and the general public were similar.

Demographic comparisons. Respondents with post-secondary education were more likely to favor or strongly favor establishing Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

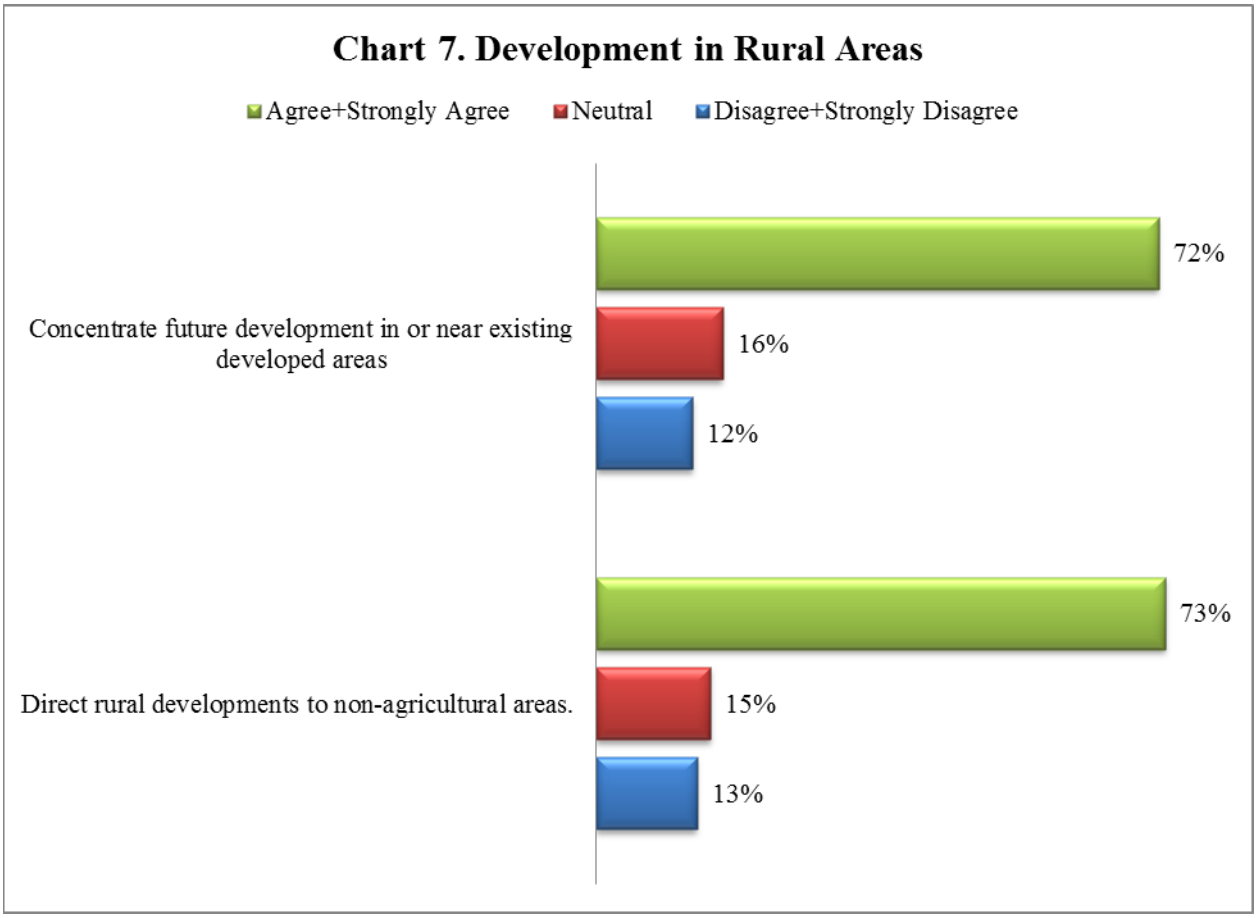
Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to favor or strongly favor the use of farmland preservation zoning and to favor or strongly favor establishment of Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

A greater percentage of respondents from area D (see Map 1) were neutral with respect to using farmland preservation zoning.

Development in Rural Areas

The survey next asked agricultural stakeholders and the general public two questions about non-agricultural development in rural areas of the County and a question about rural subdivision design. As shown in Chart 7, over 70 percent of respondents said they strongly agree or agree (top bar) that non-agricultural development should be concentrated near existing communities or other developed areas. Only 12 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (bottom bar), while 16 percent were neutral (middle bar).

Similarly, over 70 percent agrreed or strongly agreed that if development does occur in areas away from existing development, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas. Only 13 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 15 percent were neutral.



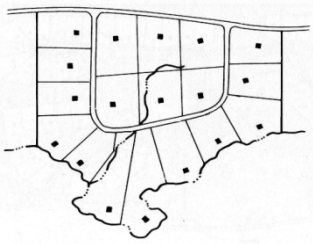
Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The differences were matters of degree; larger majorities of agricultural stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed with both these statements.

Demographic Comparisons. A larger majority of respondents with household annual incomes below $50,000 agreed or strongly agreed with both statements about development in rural areas.

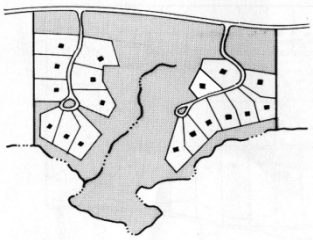
Agricultural stakeholders and rural residents were asked to indicate their design preferences for rural housing developments. Options were for traditional rural housing development on large individual lots or for cluster design with smaller individual lots in which the remaining area is held as shared open space.

About six in ten respondents said they prefer the cluster design compared to four in ten who preferred the traditional rural residential layout. The SRC has asked a similar question in nearly 100 other surveys, with comparable results.

Traditional 41%



Clustered 59%



Comparision between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. There was no difference of opinion between agricultural stakeholders and the general public.

Demographic comparisons. There were no notable differences among the demographic groups.

Conclusions

Respondents to this survey identified issues and trends that are a source of concern about the future of farmland in Marathon County and indicated support for some policies and tools to address their concerns.

- Six in ten agricultural stakeholders said that land fragmentation and the cost of farmland are concerns.
- More than four in ten believe that productive farmland won't be available in 20 years in the County.

With respect to addressing these concerns:

- Half of agricultural stakeholders and the general public favored or strongly favored using farmland preservation zoning.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that non-agricultural development should be concentrated near existing communities or other developed areas.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that if development is allowed in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.

For the most part, agricultural stakeholders and rural residents hold similar opinions with respect to questions asked on both versions of the survey. Differences tended to be matters of degree that did not impact the overall interpretation of the data.

While agricultural stakeholders and the public generally supported selected governmental intervention to address concerns about agriculture and farmland, there was a significant minority of agricultural stakeholders who believe that it is not the role of government to intervene. As shown in Chart 2, 37 percent of agricultural stakeholders said regulations to keep land in agriculture are a low or very low priority. In a similar vein, agricultural stakeholders who believe that it is not the role of government to intervene in these situations frequently wrote statements to that effect in the open-ended comment box.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey has to be concerned with "non-response bias." Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, suppose most non-respondents prefer cluster design for rural housing developments, whereas most of those who returned their questionnaire prefer traditional layout. In this case, non-response bias would exist, and the raw results would overstate the preference for traditional rural subdivision layout.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group.

We found six variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of 45 tested. Table A1 indicates that even when statistical differences exist, the magnitude of this difference is very small.

There were slightly fewer beef operators and tree farm operators in the responses to the second mailing. Respondents to the second mailing gave slightly higher importance ratings for developing less restrictive agricultural regulations and for less restrictive non-agricultural regulations. Respondents to the first mailing were more likely give a higher priority through conservation practices and to agree that future development should be concentrated in or near existing cities/villages or other developed areas.

Based on the small number of variables (6) with statistically significant differences and the small differences in the results among those six variables, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Mailings

Variable	Statistical Significance	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing
Beef operator	.021	.33	.18
Tree farm operator	.037	.06	.00
Less restrictive agricultural regulations	.008	3.00	2.71
Less restrictive non-agricultural regulations	.001	3.57	3.21
Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	.007	2.46	2.71
Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas	.041	2.09	2.28

Appendix B –Marathon County Farmland Preservation Planning Survey: Open-ended and "Other" Responses.

Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business: "Other" responses. (20 responses)

- Hay Sales (4x)
- Chicken/Eggs (2x)
- Retired (2x)
- Dairy heifers
- Forestry, alfalfa
- Honey
- Hops
- I do not farm/own a business
- Large animal dairy vet service
- Machinery repair
- Mink
- Rent farmland to charge day
- Sold milking herd cost summer
- Sweet corn sales
- We are not active in farming at this time

Activities/Enterprises on Farm/Business: "Other livestock." (19 responses)

- Chickens (4x)
- Dairy (3x)
- Pigs (3x)
- Sheep (3x)
- Beef
- Dogs
- Draft horses
- Heifer Raising
- Mink ranching
- Public is welcome

Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland?

<u>Government Regulations and Taxes (19 responses)</u>

- All government programs cost money. We need to pay our bills. The state and county government need to pay their bills. No need taxes and quit looking for a way to expand government. This would mean higher taxes and new taxes then we don't need.
- Better tax credit for farmland to preserve the farmland.
- Don't over regulate and make it a county that nobody wants to farm in. You can't make everybody happy. We farm because we are independent. If we wanted to be regulated to death we would work for somebody.

- I believe in freedom - government out. Then agri producers will find their markets and the support markets will be created as needed that way tax money can stay in the pockets of the people. Farmers should be allowed sell raw milk.
- I strongly feel that a regulation should be put in place to restrict the placement of houses within farm fields. There is only so much farmland available and placing a house in the middle of a tillable field seriously affects the value of that land. Farming is no longer done with a horse and one bottom plow; today's equipment requires room to work. This regulation would allow a residence to be built only in a corner of a tillable field thereby preserving the most useable farmland.
- If you want more farmland do away with this CRP. It's very stupid to let good farmland grow up in weeds and brush for wildlife. Fly over the US and see all the land there is for wildlife. Don't pay people to let good farmland grow up in weeds. Is the government that stupid?!
- Lower Taxes.
- Luxury tax on plot of farmland used for residential use.
- Marathon County is over regulated. Examples: 1. Even though we sold our cattle and just grow crops we still need a manure management plan which is very expensive. It is too complicated for someone without agronomy training to fill out. 2. There has never been a case of sickness due to consuming maple syrup but now producers need to get inspected. The regulations for the building are ridiculous.
- More cost sharing for farmyards and manure pits, etc. Cost sharing for farm wiring upgrades. Marshfield and electric has none. FSA beginning farmer loans are for people farming 10 years or less but if you had to rent for years and years you don't qualify even though you don't own your farm. That should be changed.
- No I think it’s better if government stays out of farming endeavors.
- Offer more incentives to farmers who pasture their animals that aren't necessarily "intensive rotational grazers" such as cow lane cost sharing, watering, fencing etc.
- Probably would be best if the government would take care of the roads and leave the land to the farmers.
- Quit harassing manure haulers and trying to blame them for poor road quality.
- There are more than enough regulations!
- Too much government too many programs. DNR up your butt. Can't do this & that. Damn wild animals threatening livestock including turkey shit everywhere.
- Use ATC funds only environment projects.
- We need a program that puts an end to all the free grab bag that the government thinks is theirs. Keep the government out of the pockets of small businesses. Every program costs the taxpayer more money and we can't afford it anymore!
- We need better roads! We pump manure that hose to keep off the roads, but neighbors don’t want the hose to cross the [profanity deleted]. Now what? Also the cement double standard of CAFO farms and daily winter spreading and cattle in stream beds, who is infecting the water?

Farm Size (16 responses)

- Allow small family farms to have equal chances to farm programs and provide money to fix the things you want us to fix without making us do stupid stuff with it like bat houses just to take care of things like eve troughs. Listen to the farmers and be flexible with what they want to change in the plans. Working with you in the past I found even if the plan is not the best most efficient or the best way to keep manure runoff happening you won't let changes be made.
- Cut out mega farms, keep family farms.
- Encourage family farms not CAFOs!
- Help young farmers get started. Cut programs to large corporate farms and grazers.
- I am sorry but farming is becoming an obsolete job. You work 24/7 for little to no return. Owing the bank. Regulation and penalties with strings attached to any help. The small farmer is a dying breed. Most farmers are caretakers of the land as it is their life and livelihood. If you don't make it more profitable for a person to become a farmer and to stay a farmer within the next 20 years we will soon see a shortage of necessary food in this country. Look at the trend of farms in each county and loss of dairy and county opposition. You have stopped the small farmer already and the large farm that is able to operate now is under fire. I'm sorry but if you can help the small farms return we might be OK.
- I do not like what I see coming in the future. It will not be good for our country. If it were up to me, I would want to see farming in the future like this. Farming should be on the small side. No more than sixty cows. They should be milked by a robot milking three to four times a day and the farming should be done by the family only. Father and mother and some of your children only. Or by someone by themselves with a little or no help. I think a farmer should love their work and their animals. You have to be on the small side, and then you will become attached to your cattle. Then and your cattle will get better care. If you would farm like this you would not want to sell your land. Farmers and children should have four years of good education on the type of farming they want to do before they become a farmer and I mean the right education. It took me thirty years to learn how to do it right and there are things I should know yet. There should be a good price for the things you sell so you can make a good income.
- I think there should be regulations on the mega-farms. They are the ones driving up land prices because they need the acres to haul manure; making it impossible for smaller younger people to get started.
- Limit the size of large farms or CAFO's and where they can be located like 1 CAFO per township.
- Money for manure pits on smaller farms.
- No breaks for big/large farm operations. Dairy farms become first, commodity 2nd for incentives, since dairy feeds the world more than one way and they have cows to feed.
- Stop large farm from renting whole farms and putting the farms in all corn or beans.
- The county should not give support to factory farms. They are buying land all the time. Labor comes from outside the area. We cannot compete with this.

- There are too many incentives and grants for large farms - small farms used to support families that in turn supported villages and people were loyal to businesses and farmers will only get as much money as government wants them to have, because in order to control people - you control food. The next generation on farms will be owned by financial institutions or corporations (absentee owners).
- They should support the smaller farmers and take some support away from the larger farmers. When the smaller farms are gone they're gone forever! Which I feel hurts the economy and our local businesses!
- We are a small family farm and the only program we use is strip cropping to keep our top soil. The rest of your programs and regulations you can keep.
- Worthless people signing up for grants to get big buildings, livestock, big equipment and have Mexican slaves milk hundreds of cows to get better milk & input goals while the rest of us foot the bill. And when we can't make it we're broke. But the big guys get bailed out while they sit on their ass and we work ours off!!!! You set up big farms and break small ones. You hardly see a small herd of cows in a pasture. Humane? Yeah right.

Environment and Natural Resources (7 responses)

- Grazing - continue to support at every level but especially help people with fencing and watering and planting management. Crucial for small dairy operations and new young farmers of the future.
- I think all farmers should have nutrient management regardless if they spread manure or fertilizer. What I see happening is dairy farmers rotate with hay in rotation and grain farmers have big 40-60 acre fields that could be called highly erodible diesel or plowed in fall. The next spring those fields have brown water running off them.
- More ditching assistance.
- Prevent fish kills on Marathon County lakes and streams. Zoning to keep out houses. Programs to keep sediment from reaching rivers.
- Promote agricultural practices specific to our location. This is not Iowa and no-till may not always be the right thing to do.
- Supporting renewable energy on farms would preserve farmland indirectly because it would be another income stream for farmers. Also policies that support livestock over cash grain would be good for both economic and environmental sustainability. Especially if livestock are grazed. This has been proven over the past 10 to 20 years. Also grass based operations are one of the few ways a young person can afford to get into the industry in an ownership capacity.
- We need to ensure all residents are drinking clean water from their wells.

Farmland Preservation Tools (9 responses)

- Ag zoning for county.
- Conservations easements.
- Get info out there! I've worked on trying to get into farmland preservation for over 1 year now! Still not there! A checklist would be nice to help those that are interested!

- I feel very strongly about farmland preservation. I feel this country should get into the purchase of development rights on some of these farms that are going out of business. It would slow down the terrible waste of quality farmland into development; the farmer could farm this land with a long-term contract keeping it in production ag. It should have been in effect a long time ago. Once the land is ruined with development it's too late! I would gladly participate in this program if it was offered to us. We farm NW of Wausau (family farm 134 years, 5th generation). Development around here is killing us and making it too far out of reach financially to acquire this land. I know this is supposed to be a confidential survey but I feel so strong about this subject I will put my name on it and hope to be contacted for it.
- I think there should be an incentive or something for old retirement age farmers to rent or sell farms or farmland to beginning farmers farming less than 10 years.
- Investigate feasibility of public purchase of development rights, any program needs to be lucrative to landowners in order to preserve prime agricultural lands for older owners the 70 allowable now isn't sufficient to hold agricultural lands out of the development marked.
- Redevelopment of unused property within city limits.
- Slow the building of homes on agriculture land!
- This may be only a township local being issue but I strongly support our township requiring 35+ acres as a minimum land requirement for new residential construction. I feel this minimizes development where development does occur a larger portion of the acreage is left in tillable land. Feel that this would be beneficial one county level ag designated areas.

Miscellaneous (4 responses)

- Disabled farmer's a program to help an injured person to improve or change their farm to continue in farming.
- Find a manufacturer that can produce a container for milk as good as glass. Plastic containers ruin the taste of milk. This would really get people to drink milk again. Think that would do for the dairy farmers and Marathon County. That would do more good than any taxpayers' dollars. Take that request to UW Madison and see if they can develop this with God's help.
- Land will continue to go to the highest value use. Example is houses. Corn, beans, hay programs are designed to fail always did always will.
- My answers aren't from a normal farmer. I am 70, did 45 years of dairy 24/7 with hubby. He retired for 3 months now and at 73 is still taking care of a beef herd 25-40 hours a week. Still love dairy farming in Wisconsin. We sold the buildings of the farm we retired from on a land contract to young couple who now rent the land. In 3 more years they can buy that on land contract. Two years ago we picked up a dairy that a bank held but only have 14 acres so no crops. Son is running it and will buy on land contract 18 months from now. We own the cattle but will sell to him by May. He is the 8th young person that we've given a chance to dairy farm but the only one with financial help. We've purchased

4 dairy farms over the years that were bank owned or in trouble - such a joy to set them to rights!

If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is a high or very high priority, what sources do you feel should be used to pay for the associated costs? "Other" responses.

Agricultural Stakeholder Responses (34 responses)

- State Dollars. (5x)
- Road repairs and updating. (3x)
- A fair balance. (2x)
- Combination of both. (2x)
- Exempt all farm related equipment and vehicles from road weight limits. (2x)
- Increased pay per load. (2x)
- Build farms on all season roads not town granite roads.
- Build incinerators burn all the garbage and sell electricity to pay the loads no landfills needed.
- Enforce current laws.
- If you knew the # per square in on large equipment is less than the small equipment you don't need better roads equipped for the large manure tracks which should be made to handle small loads.
- Interim licensing.
- Many of these farmers are using roads when they could run on their own land.
- Need less restrictive regulations.
- No tax increase.
- Permits (Designated for road construction only!)
- The roads are okay as they are!
- The size of machinery allowed is too excessive. The concept of bigger faster is wrong.
- Those that have big equipment.
- Township input.
- Transportation fund - stop robbing it!!!
- Watch trucks loaded on posted roads in spring wood fiber hauls.
- Weight limits heavy manure traffic.
- What about everybody else who drive large loads on the road. I only need to cross the road & drive 1/2 mile and I have to fill out all this paperwork.
- With big tires pound per square inch is less so most roads would already hold up.

General Public Responses (21 responses)

- State transportation dollars and federal tax funds. (3x)
- A combination of tax dollars and increased user fees. (2x)
- State grants. (2x)
- 30/70 split between 30% tax and 70% user fees.
- Ag producers.
- All production land is rented out.
- Do not increase capacity on roads. It tears them up.
- Enforce laws we now have. "No more new laws."
- Existing gas tax, supposed to be used to maintain and improve roads.

- Farmer and users who rely on it.
- Fines for non-compliance.
- Fuel tax money from state and fed.
- I think the large equipment, tractor and big machinery should pay for our dust control on our dirt roads.
- Limited times for heavy equipment use.
- State road taxes, truck licensing increases.
- This depends on where road is and necessary means.
- Weight limit and enforce them. Not just $3500 for use of roads.

48. Employment Status: Other responses (9 responses)

- Disabled. (3x)
- Farming.
- Full-time student.
- Hobby farm.
- Laid off.
- Semi-retired.
- Stay at home mom.

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – Combined Agricultural Stakeholders and General Public

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

What is your opinion about the following agricultural resource issues/concerns?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. I could currently find productive/quality farmland to rent or buy in Marathon County	4%	29%	17%	31%	14%	6%
2. Productive farmland will generally NOT be available for farmland in 20 years in Marathon County	13%	27%	20%	25%	8%	6%
3. Finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult	7%	24%	18%	35%	9%	6%
4. Fragmented land and smaller parcels are making farming more difficult in Marathon County	17%	39%	13%	23%	4%	4%
5. The road network in Marathon County is adequate for agricultural needs for the next 20 years	7%	36%	17%	22%	13%	4%
6. Marathon County needs more local machinery repair, supply and parts businesses	11%	30%	31%	21%	2%	5%
7. Marathon County needs more agricultural processing facilities	9%	30%	38%	17%	2%	5%
8. Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities	10%	34%	34%	13%	2%	6%
9. The cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County	19%	36%	18%	19%	4%	4%

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
10. Cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices	12%	18%	36%	16%	8%	9%
11. Financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation	22%	28%	22%	15%	7%	5%
12. Programs (voluntary participation) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	23%	33%	22%	12%	7%	3%
13. Regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	16%	23%	21%	19%	17%	5%
14. Programs to ensure supply of agricultural managers over next 20 years	5%	17%	29%	25%	15%	9%
15. Policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses (feed, seed, implement dealers, chemical, etc.)	8%	19%	33%	22%	13%	6%
16. Policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers (veterinary clinic, manure spreading, milk haulers, equipment service/maintenance)	8%	23%	32%	21%	11%	6%
17. Policies to attract/expand agricultural processing enterprises (dairy processing, meat processing, etc.	10%	18%	32%	24%	10%	6%

18. Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business? (mark all that apply)

67% Dairy	2% Nursery	2% Community Supported Agriculture
30% Beef	5% Fruit/Vegetable	57% Grain (corn, soybeans, small grain)
1% Game farm (deer, pheasant, etc.)	13% Maple syrup	2% Ag Tourism (sleigh/hay rides, corn maze, pumpkin patch, etc.)
5% Ginseng	1% Potatoes	0% Other livestock _____
5% Tree farm		
7% Other_____		

19. Which of the following describes your farm/business? (• mark one only)

13% Retirement farm	23% Farm occupation (<$100K gross)	11% Large commercial farm ($250K-$500K gross)
17% Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)	29% Farm Occupation ($100K-$250K gross)	7% Very large commercial (>$500K gross)

20. How many acres do you operate?

<40 acres	40-149 acres	150-499 acres	500-999 acres	1000+ acres
5%	27%	52%	10%	6%

21. What percentage of acres farmed are rented?

0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
33%	29%	19%	11%	9%

22. What percentage of last year's annual household income came from farming?

0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
6%	19%	12%	13%	49%

23. Do you participate in farmland preservation programs?

Yes	No
42%	58%

24. When do you anticipate transfer of ownership of your farmland?

< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.
16%	23%	31%	30%

25. Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland? Please us the space below.

See Appendix B

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	**Very High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**	**No Opinion**
26. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	24%	27%	27%	12%	5%	5%
27. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	17%	29%	31%	12%	7%	5%
28. More restrictive agricultural regulations	4%	9%	23%	23%	32%	8%
29. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	12%	22%	28%	17%	12%	9%
30. More restrictive non-agricultural regulations	8%	16%	26%	19%	18%	13%
31. Less restrictive non-agricultural regulations	5%	12%	27%	23%	21%	12%
32. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	10%	26%	34%	14%	10%	6%
33. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	11%	16%	28%	19%	21%	6%
34. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	12%	18%	30%	20%	16%	5%

35. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

25% County levy (tax dollars)

67% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)

8% Other _____

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. **(please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column)**

Policy Option:	**Most Important**	**2nd Most Important**	**3rd Most Important**	**4th Most Important**
36. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	21%	13%	12%	23%
37. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	12%	15%	16%	30%
38. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	14%	18%	40%	18%
39. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	17%	34%	20%	14%
40. Protect groundwater	36%	20%	13%	15%

41. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

Strongly Favor	**Favor**	**Neutral**	**Oppose**	**Strongly oppose**	**Need More Information**
11%	33%	25%	11%	7%	13%

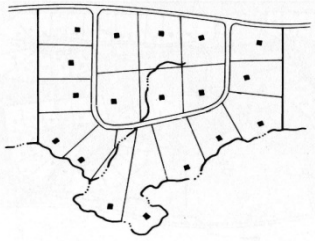
42. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
11%	41%	23%	9%	6%	10%

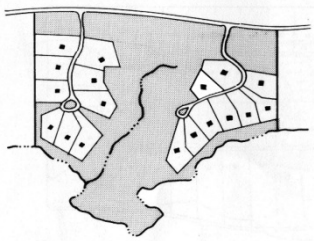
Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
43. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	31%	40%	16%	8%	4%	2%
44. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	29%	41%	14%	8%	4%	4%

45. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

41% OPTION A



59% OPTION B



DEMOGRAPHICS

46. Gender

Male	Female
77%	23%

47. Age

18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
0%	7%	13%	24%	26%	30%

48. Employment Status

Employed full-time	Self – employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other: _____
37%	29%	5%	1%	26%	2%

49. Highest level of education

Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Grad or professional deg
7%	29%	28%	16%	15%	6%

50. Place of Residence

Own	Rent
94%	6%

51. Children under age 18 in household

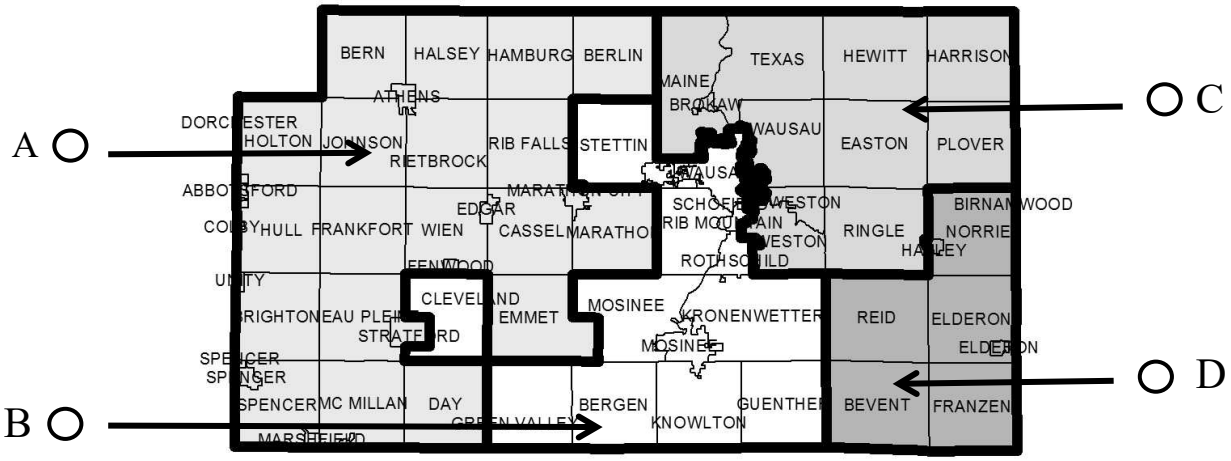
0	1	2	3	4	5+
74%	9%	9%	4%	2%	2%

52. Household income range

Less than $25,000	$25,000 – 34,999	$35,000 – 49,999	$50,000 – 74,999	$75,000 – $99,999	$100,000+
14%	19%	16%	23%	13%	15%

53. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

Area A: 41%
Area B: 29%
Area C: 24%
Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

Survey Research Center,
University of Wisconsin – River Falls
124 Regional Development Institute
410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001

Appendix D – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – Agricultural Stakeholders

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

What is your opinion about the following agricultural resource issues/concerns?	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**No Opinion**
1. I could currently find productive/quality farmland to rent or buy in Marathon County	4%	29%	17%	31%	14%	6%
2. Productive farmland will generally NOT be available for farmland in 20 years in Marathon County	13%	27%	20%	25%	8%	6%
3. Finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult	7%	24%	18%	35%	9%	6%
4. Fragmented land and smaller parcels are making farming more difficult in Marathon County	17%	39%	13%	23%	4%	4%
5. The road network in Marathon County is adequate for agricultural needs for the next 20 years	7%	36%	17%	22%	13%	4%
6. Marathon County needs more local machinery repair, supply and parts businesses	11%	30%	31%	21%	2%	5%
7. Marathon County needs more agricultural processing facilities	9%	30%	38%	17%	2%	5%
8. Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities	10%	34%	34%	13%	2%	6%
9. The cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County	19%	36%	18%	19%	4%	4%

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	**Very High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**	**No Opinion**
10. Cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices	12%	18%	36%	16%	8%	9%
11. Financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation	22%	28%	22%	15%	7%	5%
12. Programs (voluntary participation) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	23%	33%	22%	12%	7%	3%
13. Regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	16%	23%	21%	19%	17%	5%
14. Programs to ensure supply of agricultural managers over next 20 years	5%	17%	29%	25%	15%	9%
15. Policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses (feed, seed, implement dealers, chemical, etc.)	8%	19%	33%	22%	13%	6%
16. Policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers (veterinary clinic, manure spreading, milk haulers, equipment service/maintenance)	8%	23%	32%	21%	11%	6%
17. Policies to attract/expand agricultural processing enterprises (dairy processing, meat processing, etc.	10%	18%	32%	24%	10%	6%

18. Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business? (mark all that apply)

67%	Dairy	2%	Nursery	2%	Community Supported Agriculture
30%	Beef	5%	Fruit/Vegetable	57%	Grain (corn, soybeans, small grain)
1%	Game farm (deer, pheasant, etc.)	13%	Maple syrup	2%	Ag Tourism (sleigh/hay rides, corn maze, pumpkin patch, etc.)
5%	Ginseng	1%	Potatoes	0%	Other livestock _____
5%	Tree farm				
7%	Other_____				

19. Which of the following describes your farm/business? (• mark one only)

13%	Retirement farm	23%	Farm occupation (<$100K gross)	11%	Large commercial farm ($250K-$500K gross)
17%	Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)	29%	Farm Occupation ($100K-$250K gross)	7%	Very large commercial (>$500K gross)

20. How many acres do you operate?

<40 acres	40-149 acres	150-499 acres	500-999 acres	1000+ acres
5%	27%	52%	10%	6%

21. What percentage of acres farmed are rented?

0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
33%	29%	19%	11%	9%

22. What percentage of last year's annual household income came from farming?

0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
6%	19%	12%	13%	49%

23. Do you participate in farmland preservation programs?

Yes	No
42%	58%

24. When do you anticipate transfer of ownership of your farmland?

< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.
16%	23%	31%	30%

25. Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland? Please us the space below.

See Appendix B

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	**Very High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**	**No Opinion**
26. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	12%	20%	34%	20%	7%	7%
27. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	14%	25%	31%	18%	6%	6%
28. More restrictive agricultural regulations	2%	5%	21%	23%	43%	6%
29. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	18%	26%	29%	15%	7%	7%
30. More restrictive non-agricultural regulations	10%	17%	28%	17%	15%	12%
31. Less restrictive non-agricultural regulations	5%	6%	28%	24%	24%	13%
32. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	7%	17%	36%	21%	12%	7%
33. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	10%	13%	23%	21%	27%	7%
34. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	16%	19%	26%	23%	11%	6%

35. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

36% County levy (tax dollars)

55% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)

10% Other _____

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. **(please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column)**

Policy Option:	**Most Important**	**2nd Most Important**	**3rd Most Important**	**4th Most Important**
36. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	31%	16%	9%	21%
37. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	17%	19%	13%	20%
38. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	18%	20%	32%	20%
39. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	9%	26%	27%	17%
40. Protect groundwater	25%	19%	19%	21%

41. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

Strongly Favor	**Favor**	**Neutral**	**Oppose**	**Strongly oppose**	**Need More Information**
15%	32%	21%	11%	8%	13%

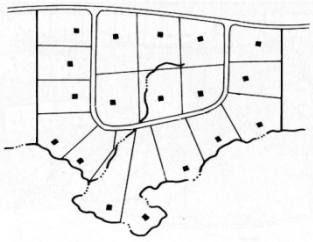
42. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
13%	40%	21%	8%	7%	10%

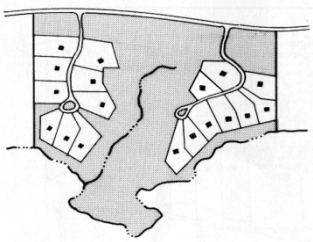
Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
43. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	36%	39%	16%	5%	2%	2%
44. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	37%	42%	10%	6%	2%	3%

45. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

38% OPTION A



62% OPTION B



DEMOGRAPHICS

46. Gender

Male	Female
88%	12%

47. Age

18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
0%	3%	11%	28%	30%	27%

48. Employment Status

Employed full-time	Self – employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other: _____
22%	56%	7%	1%	13%	1%

49. Highest level of education

Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Grad or professional deg
10%	35%	29%	14%	8%	3%

50. Place of Residence

Own	Rent
99%	1%

51. Children under age 18 in household

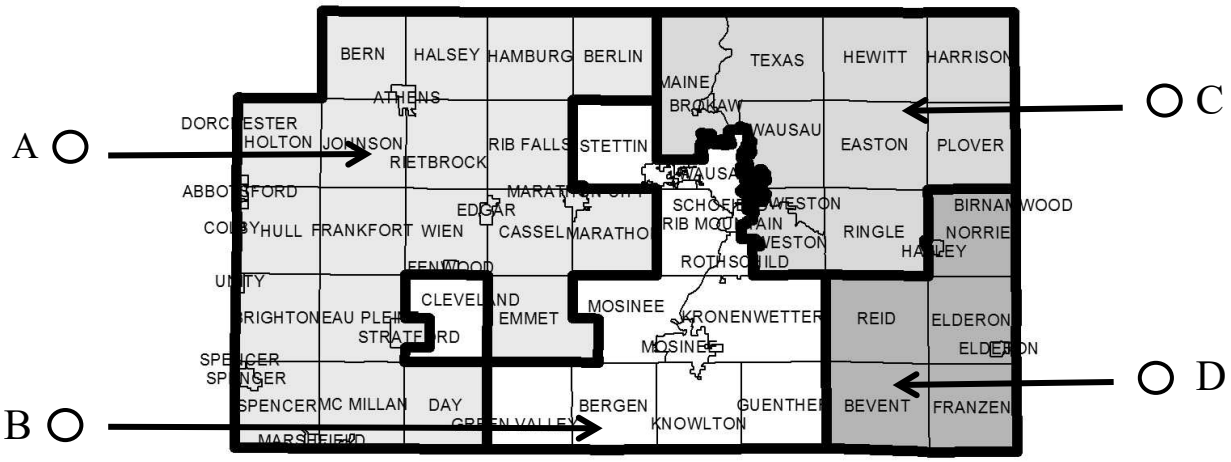
0	1	2	3	4	5+
73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%

52. Household income range

Less than $25,000	$25,000 – 34,999	$35,000 – 49,999	$50,000 – 74,999	$75,000 – $99,999	$100,000+
73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%

53. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

Area A: 67%
Area B: 12%
Area C: 15%
Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

Survey Research Center,
University of Wisconsin – River Falls
124 Regional Development Institute
410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001

Appendix E - Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – General Public

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
1. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	32%	32%	22%	6%	4%	3%
2. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	18%	32%	30%	9%	7%	4%
3. More restrictive agricultural regulations	5%	12%	25%	23%	25%	10%
4. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	9%	19%	27%	19%	15%	11%
5. More restrictive non-agricultural regulations	7%	15%	25%	21%	19%	13%
6. Less restrictive non-agricultural regulations	5%	16%	26%	23%	18%	12%
7. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	12%	32%	32%	9%	9%	6%
8. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	12%	19%	31%	17%	16%	5%
9. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	9%	17%	33%	18%	19%	5%

10. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

16% County levy (tax dollars)

77% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)

7% Other _____

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. **(please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column)**

Policy Option:	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	4th Most Important
11. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	14%	12%	14%	25%
12. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	9%	12%	18%	36%
13. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	11%	17%	45%	17%
14. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	23%	39%	14%	13%
15. Protect groundwater	43%	20%	8%	10%

16. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
9%	33%	27%	11%	7%	14%

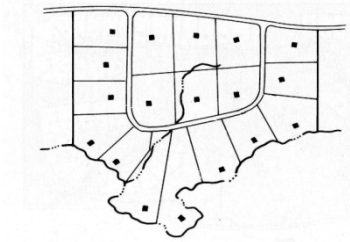
17. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
10%	41%	24%	10%	5%	9%

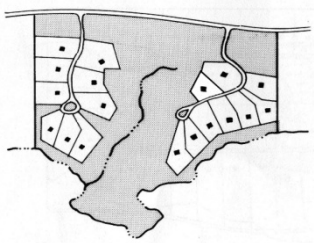
Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
18. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	26%	40%	16%	10%	5%	3%
19. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	24%	40%	17%	10%	5%	5%

20. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

43% OPTION A



57% OPTION B



DEMOGRAPHICS

21. Gender

Male	Female
70%	30%

22. Age

18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
1%	9%	14%	21%	23%	31%

23. Employment Status

Employed full-time	Self – employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other: _____
48%	9%	4%	1%	35%	2%

24. Highest level of education

Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Grad or professional deg
4%	25%	27%	16%	19%	8%

25. Place of Residence

Own	Rent
90%	10%

26. Children under age 18 in household

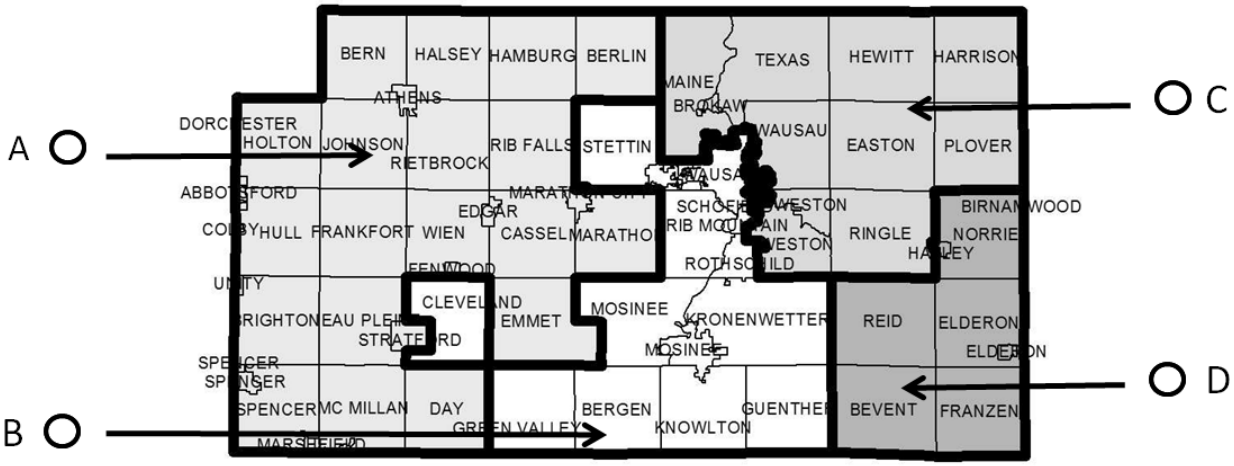
0	1	2	3	4	5+
75%	8%	11%	4%	1%	0%

27. Household income range

Less than $25,000	$25,000 – 34,999	$35,000 – 49,999	$50,000 – 74,999	$75,000 – $99,999	$100,000+
14%	14%	16%	27%	14%	15%

28. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

Area A: 24%
Area B: 41%
Area C: 29%
Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

Survey Research Center,
University of Wisconsin – River Falls
124 Regional Development Institute
410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001

APPENDIX C: AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Agricultural Cooperatives:

Marathon County Holstein Association Cooperative
Athens, WI
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales
Stratford, WI
Ginseng & Herb Co-op
Marathon City, WI
Marathon County DHIA Cooperative
Schofield, WI
River Country Co-op
Athens WI
Edgar, WI
Dorchester, WI
Allied Cooperative
Auburndale, WI
Unity, WI
Insight FS
Marshfield, WI
Stratford, WI
Wisconsin Grass-Fed Beef Cooperative
Individual Farms in Marathon County
Organic Valley Coop
Individual Farms in Marathon County

Farm Equipment Dealers:

Swiderski Equipment Inc
Mosinee, WI
Wausau, WI
Service Motor Company Inc
Wausau, WI
Strojny Implement Co
Kronenwetter, WI
Rew Motors Inc
Birnamwood, WI
Lang Equipment
Rothschild, WI
Marshfield, WI
Cherokee Garage Inc
Colby, WI
Riesterer and Schnell
Stratford, WI
Miller Tractor Sales & Service LLC
Spencer, WI
Podevels Farm Services
Marshfield, WI
Berg Equipment Corporation
Marshfield, WI
Rib Falls Repair
Athens, WI
Landwehr Repair Shop Inc
Stratford, WI
The Planter Shop
Colby, WI

Equipment Repair Shops:

Service Motor Company Inc
Wausau, WI
North Country Ag Repair LLC
Birnamwood, WI
Rib Falls Repair
Athens, WI
Pioneer Repair LLC
Edgar, WI
Strojny Implement Co
Mosinee, WI
Miller Tractor Sales & Service LLC
Spencer, WI
Tractor Shop LLC
Auburndale, WI
R&M Parts & Equipment
Athens, WI
Landwehr Repair Shop Inc
Stratford, WI
Lang Equipment
Rothschild, WI
Marshfield, WI
Rew Motors Inc
Birnamwood, WI
Swiderski Equipment Inc
Mosinee, WI
Wausau, WI
Rib Falls Repair
Athens, WI
Cherokee Garage Inc
Colby, WI
Riesterer and Schnell
Stratford, WI

Cheese Factories & Dairy Processing Plants:

Marathon Cheese Corporation
Marathon City, WI
Great Lakes Cheese Company Inc
Wausau, WI
Lactalis Heritage Dairy
Wausau, WI

Mullins Cheese
Mosinee, WI
Marshfield, WI
Harmony Cheese LLC
Athens, WI
Foremost Farms USA
Marshfield, WI
Land O' Lakes – Cheese Division
Spencer, WI
Welcome Dairy Inc
Colby, WI
Seehafer Farm Creamery
Marshfield, WI

Livestock Sales Barns:

Equity Coop Livestock Auction
Stratford, WI

Livestock Haulers:

Beels Trucking
Spencer, WI
Lance E. Bauer Transport LLC
Spencer, WI
Kraus Livestock Trucking
Stratford, WI
Bauer Trucking
Unity, WI
B Chris Farms LLC
Colby, WI

Feed Mills:

Marathon Feed Inc
Marathon City, WI
River Country Coop Feed Mill
Athens, WI
Fliss Feeds
Junction City, WI
General Farm Supply Inc
Spencer, WI
Land O'Lakes Purina Feed
Spencer, WI
Wisco Feeds/Milling Co
Abbotsford, WI
ProVision Partners Cooperative Feed Mill
Stratford, WI
D&S Milling Inc
Abbotsford, WI

Crop Consultants:

AgCountry Farm Credit Services
Wausau, WI
Marshfield Ag Service Inc
Marshfield, WI
USDA-Marathon County Farm Service Agency
Wausau, WI

Livestock Nutritionists:

Midwest Nutrition & Feed
Spencer, WI

Ag-related Trucking Companies:

Blume Farms Land & Cattle Co
Dorchester, WI

Large Animal Veterinarians:

County Center Animal Hospital
Marathon City, WI
Blue Skies Animal Clinic
Stratford, WI
Wisconsin Valley Veterinary Service
Wausau, WI
Clark-Marathon Veterinary Service
Colby, WI
Marshfield Veterinary Service
Marshfield, WI

Dairy equipment suppliers:

Bobs Dairy Supply Inc
Dorchester, WI
Kozlovsky Dairy Equipment
Schofield, WI

General Farm Suppliers:

General Farm Supply, Inc
Spencer, WI
Marshfield, WI
Marathon Feed, Inc
Marathon City, WI
Fleet Farm
Wausau, WI

Cherokee Garage Inc
Colby, WI
Swiderski Equipment Inc
Mosinee, WI
Wausau, WI
Strojny Implement Co
Mosinee, WI
HSU Growing Supply
Wausau, WI
Lang Equipment LLC
Marshfield, WI

Agriculture Building Contractors:

Marathon County Agricultural
Wausau, WI
TKC Wausau
Wausau, WI
Scherrer Construction Co Inc
Wausau, WI
Ken Bauer Construction LLC
Wausau, WI
Marawood Construction Services
Marshfield, WI
Urban Construction Company
Wausau, WI
Larry Meyer Construction Co LLC
Wausau, WI
John Ohrmundt Construction
Wausau, WI
Just Build it Construction, LLC
Wausau, WI
Keller Inc
Wausau, WI
Advantage Buildings LLC
Athens, WI
Janke General Contractors Inc
Athens, WI

Fencing Contractors:

Countryside Fence
Wausau, WI
Koehler Fencing LLC
Merrill, WI
Straight Line Fence
Wittenberg, WI
Cranky Jake LLC
Wausau, WI
Janke General Contractors Inc
Athens, WI

Manure Haulers & Crop Harvesters:

Jason Beran Trucking
Birnamwood, WI
Blasel Custom Field Work
Dorchester, WI
Blenker's Big Red
Athens, WI
Brandon's Farm Services
Dorchester, WI
Tim Bulger
Green Valley, WI
Donny and Timmy Mengel
Stratford, WI
Eby Farm Service
Colby, WI
Fellenz Custom Fieldwork
Spencer, WI
Halopka Field Service
Dorchester, WI
Hartleben Custom Cropping
Wittenberg, WI
Royal Flush Pit Pumping
Unity, WI

Manure Haulers & Crop Harvesters:

Schmidt Trucking
Birnamwood, WI
Bach Farms
Dorchester, WI
Jim Bunkelman
Athens, WI
Deininger Transport
Marshfield, WI
Stanley Halligan
Athens, WI
Kent Krueger
Athens, WI
M and M Baumann Farms LLC
Wausau, WI
QuadT LLC
Stratford, WI
Rausch Farms Custom
Athens, WI

Sandy Creek Forage Bagging
Ringle, WI
Seubert Combining and Repair
Marathon City, WI
Eric and Misty Vogel
Athens, WI
Highland Drive Farms LLC
Wausau, WI
M & J Harvesting LLC
Birnamwood, WI
Kloos Harvesting
Stratford, WI
Timber Ridge Harvesting LLC
Marathon City, WI

Agriculture Consulting Companies:

AR Agronomy LLC
Wausau, WI
Star Environmental INC
Marathon City, WI
Badger State Consulting LLC
Schofield, WI
Synagro Technologies Inc
Wausau, WI
KFischer Consulting
Wausau, WI
AgCountry Farm Credit Services
Wausau, WI
Petra Environmental Consultants
Wausau, WI
Marathon County Agricultural
Wausau, WI
USDA-Marathon County Farm Service Agency
Wausau, WI

Grain Dryers and Storage:

Marathon Feed Inc
Marathon City, WI

Greenhouses:

Leid's Greenhouse & Garden Center LLC
Athens, WI
Morning Glory Gardens
Athens, WI
Grass Creek Greenhouse LLC
Athens, WI
Bauman Nursery and Landscaping LLC
Edgar, WI
Buried Treasures Greenhouse
Stratford, WI
Schumacher's Family Tree Nursery
Marathon City, WI
Down to Earth Greenhouse
Wausau, WI
Hsu Growing Supply
Wausau, WI
Window Box Garden Gift and Home
Wausau, WI
Garden Path Greenhouses
Wausau, WI
Catrina's Garden LLC
Marathon City, WI
Rib Mountain Greenhouse
Wausau, WI
Clearview Garden Center
Weston, WI
Majestic Farms LLC
Hatley, WI
KC's Greenhouse
Birnamwood, WI
The Flower Trough
Aniwa, WI

Farm and Home Stores:

Marathon Town and Country
Wausau, WI
Fleet Farm
Wausau, WI
Marshfield, WI

Farm and Home Stores (Cont.):

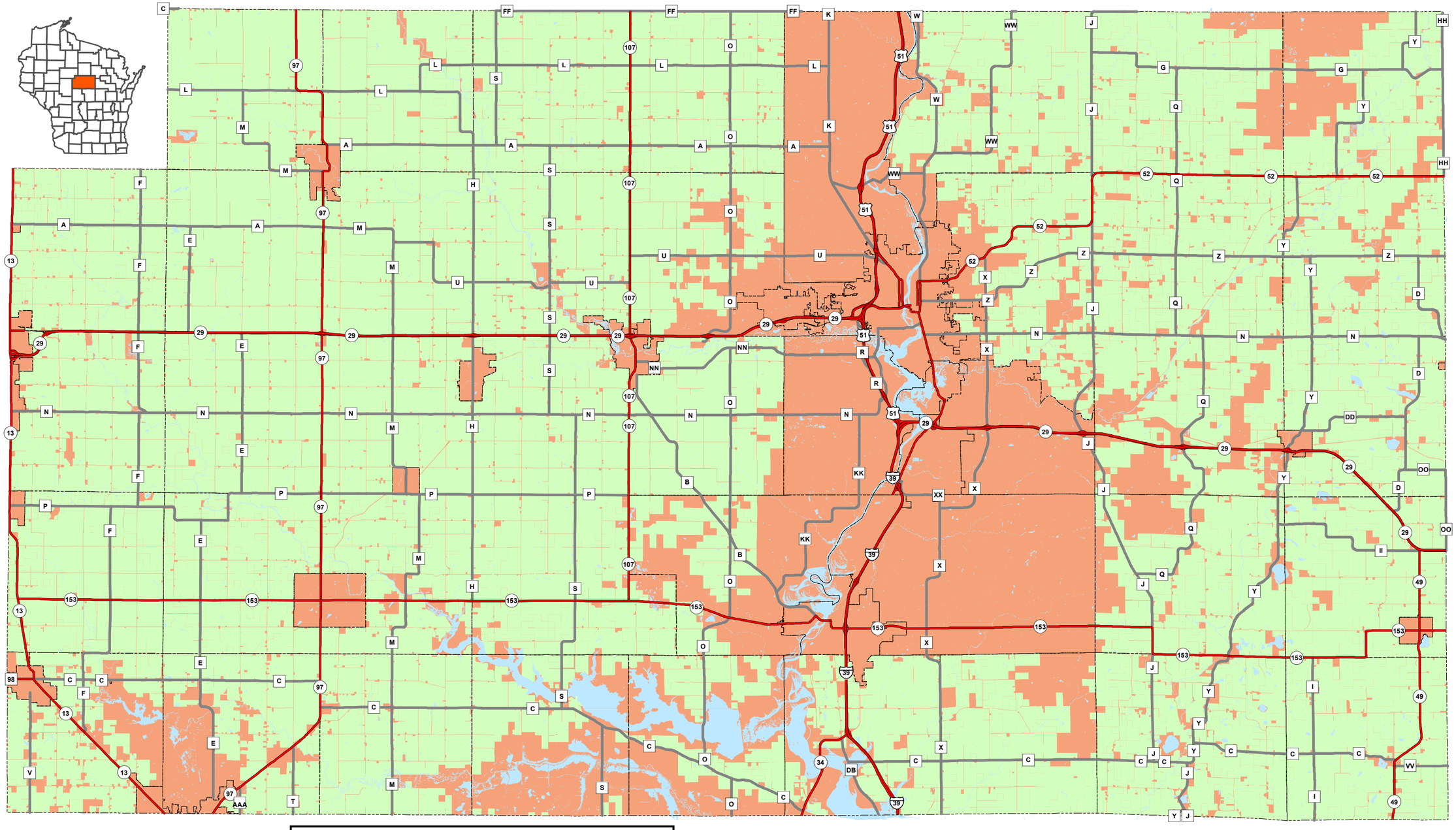
Home Depot
Wausau, WI
Schumacher's Family Tree Nursery
Marathon City, WI
Marathon Feed Inc
Marathon City, WI

Note, this list is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be all-inclusive, and does not represent an endorsement or recommendation of any business or service provider that is listed, nor a condemnation of any business or service provider that is not listed.

APPENDIX D: FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREA MAPS

Farmland Preservation Areas

Marathon County, Wisconsin



Map Print Date: 4/25/2024

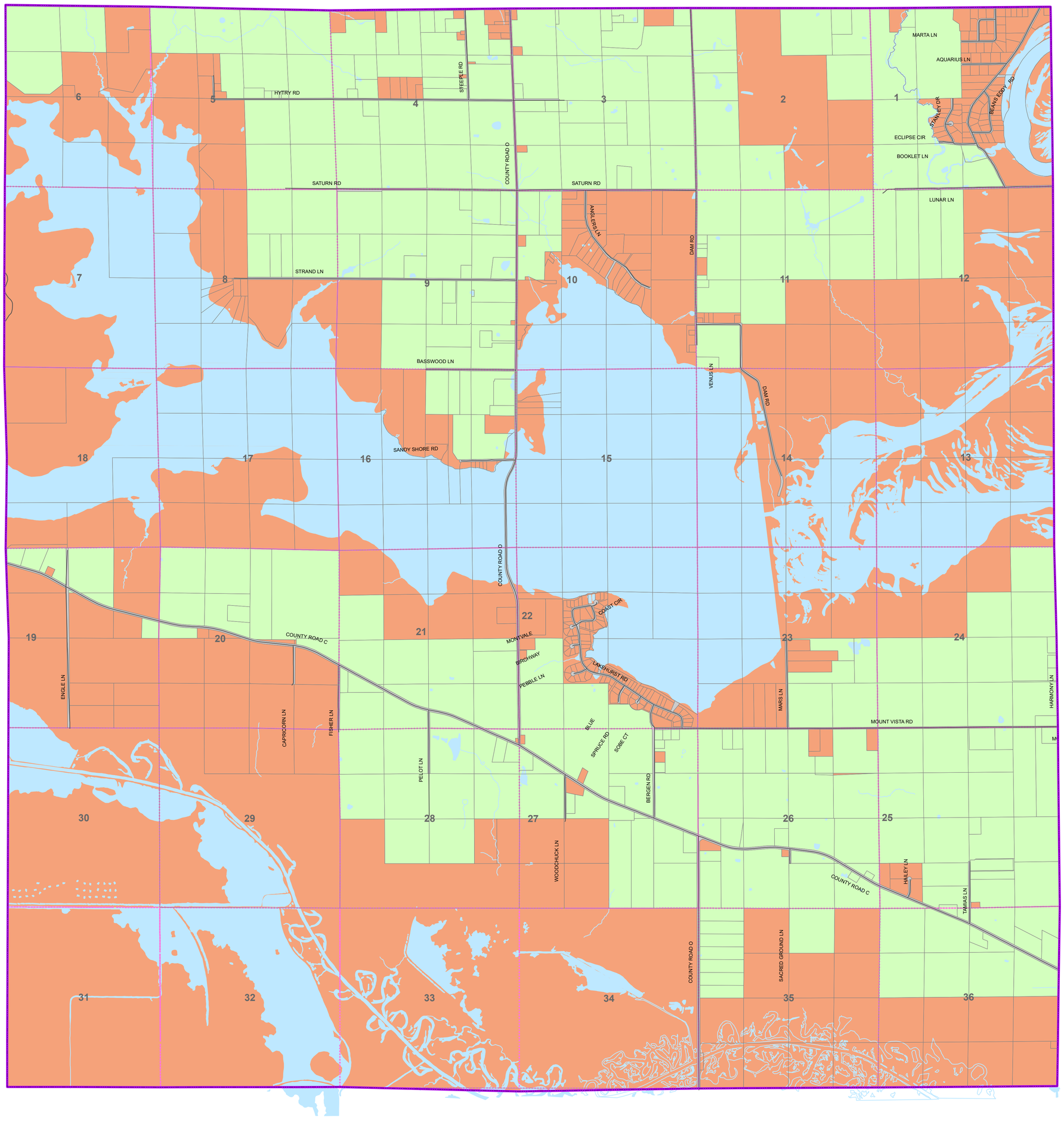
Map Developed by Marathon County
Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

MARATHON COUNTY

Marathon County

Town of Bergen

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

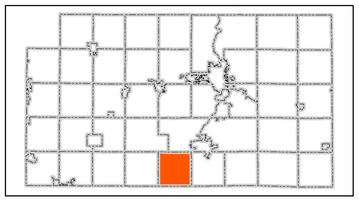


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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3,000 1,500 0 3,000 Feet

Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

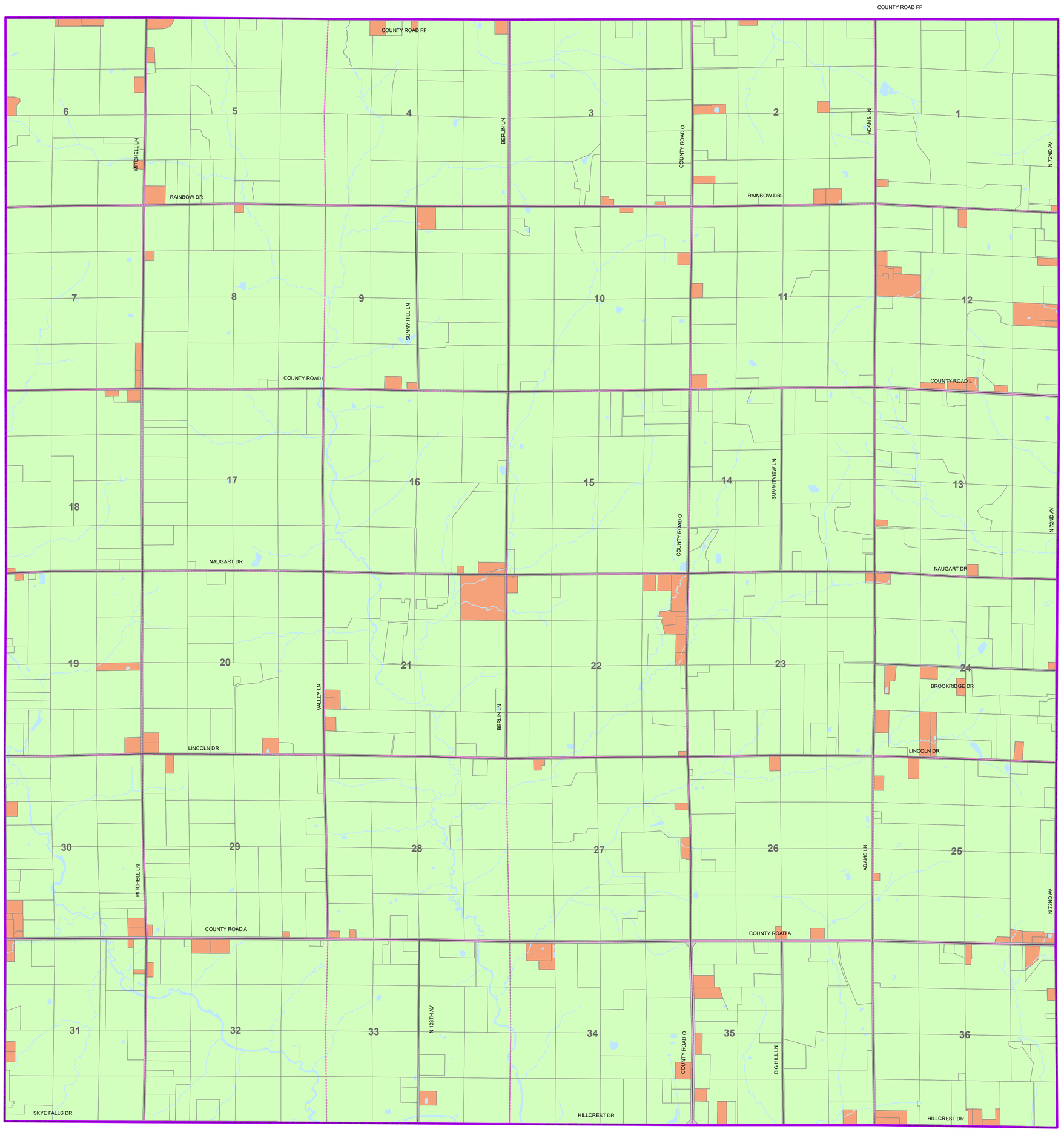
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Berlin

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

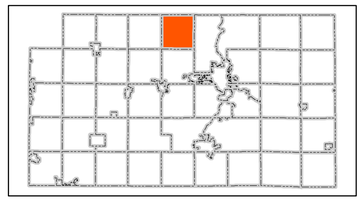


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

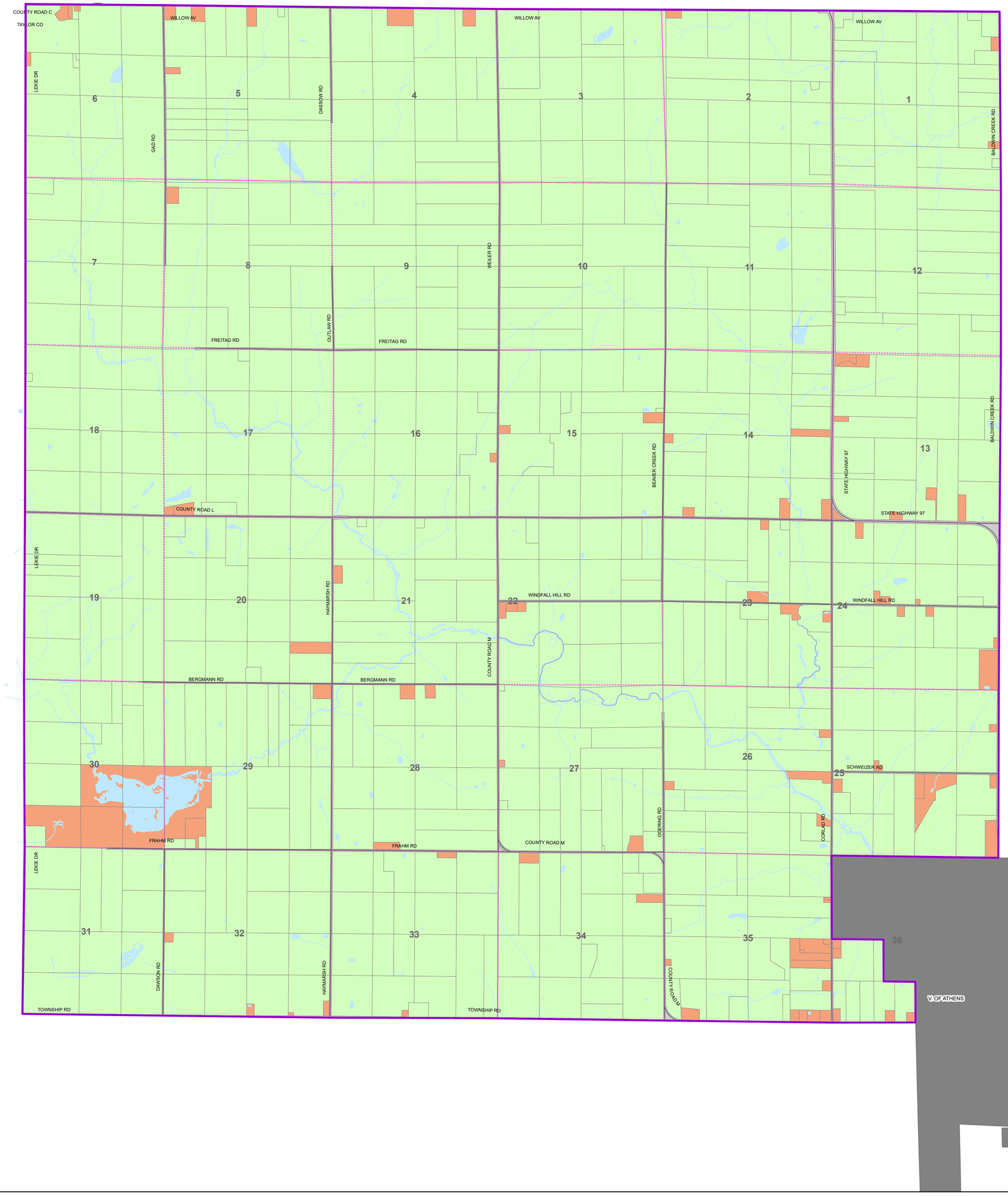
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Bern

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

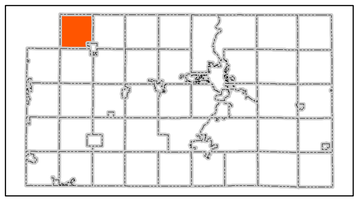


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

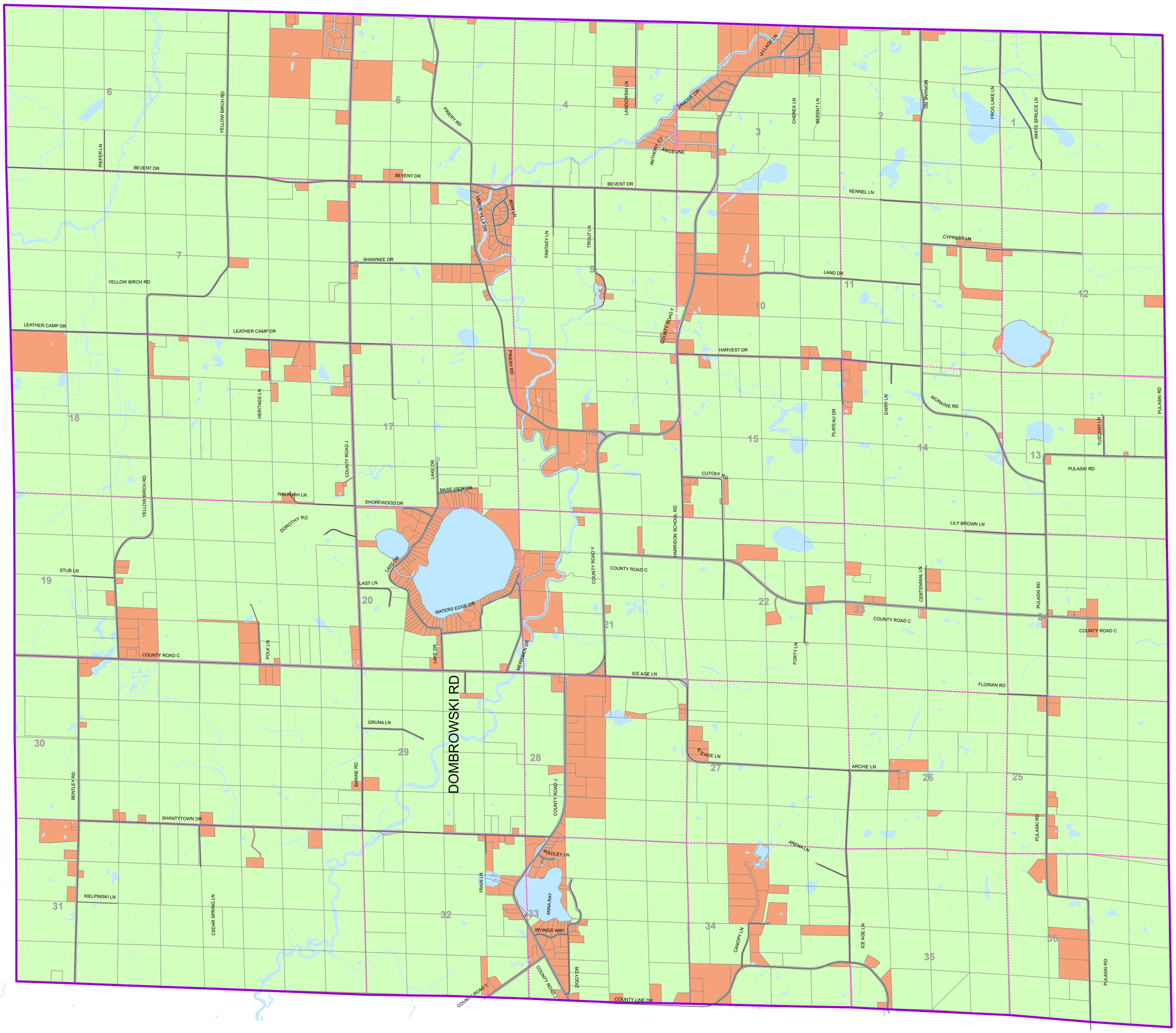
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Bevent

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

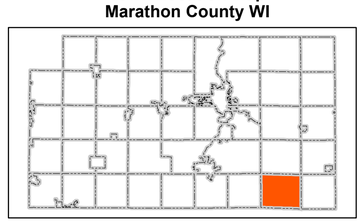


2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Areas
Parcels
Sections (est.)
Roads
Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

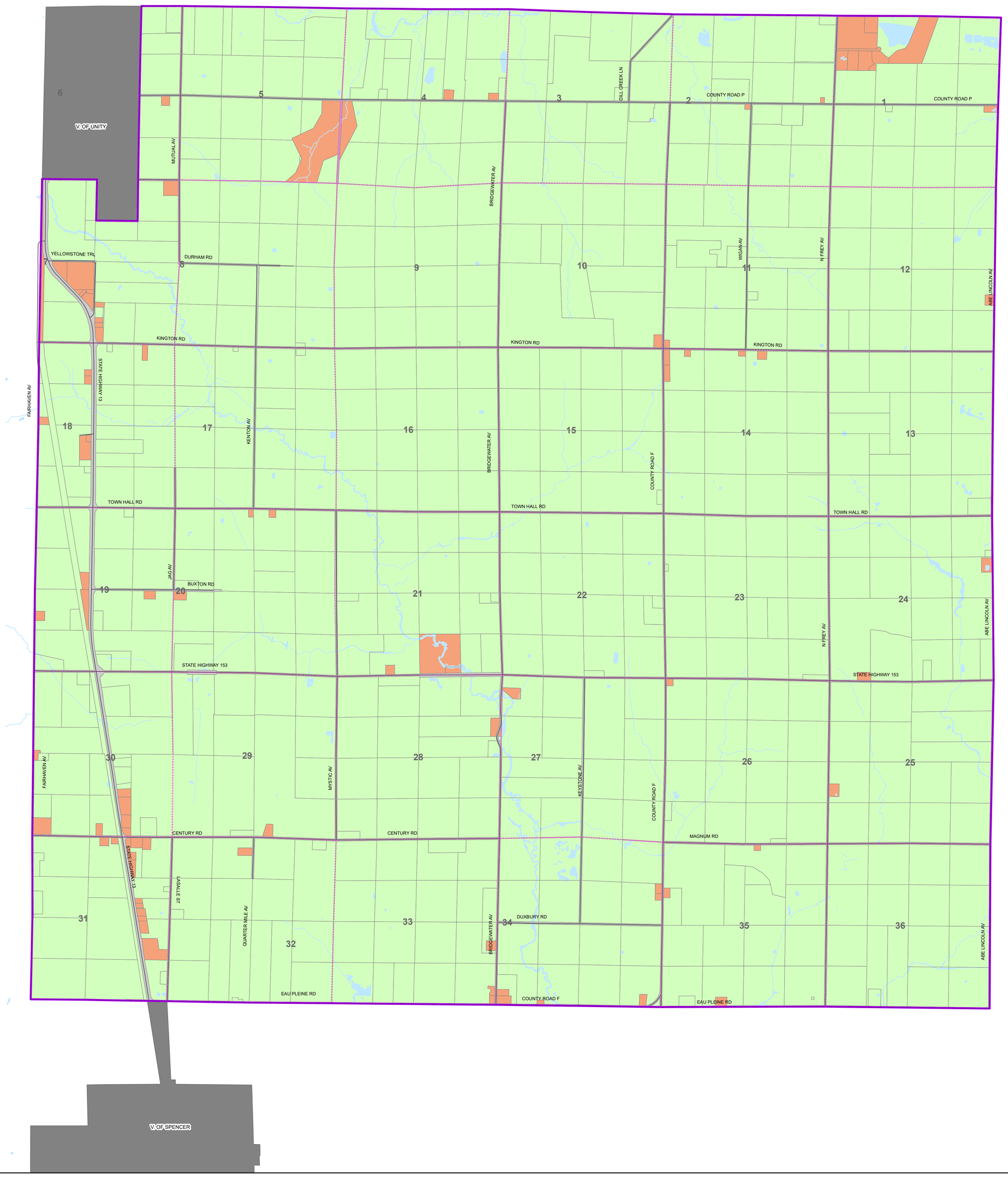
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Brighton

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

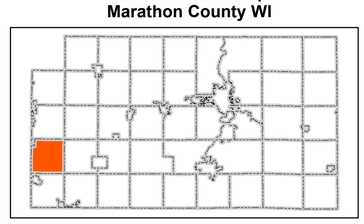


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

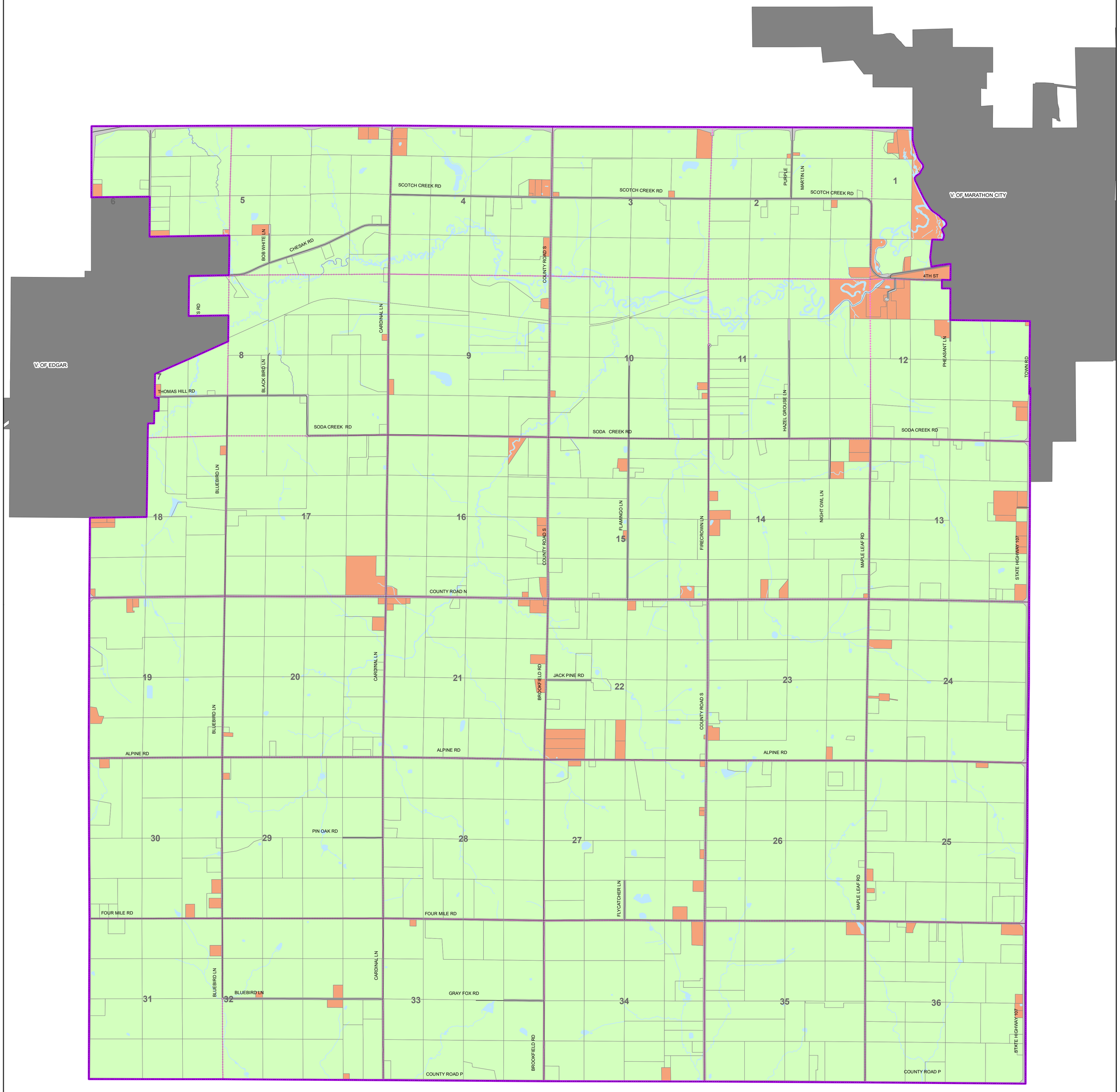
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Marathon County

Town of Cassel

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

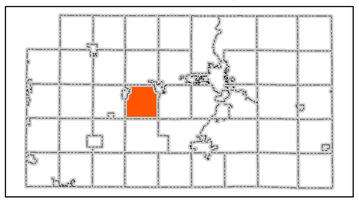


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

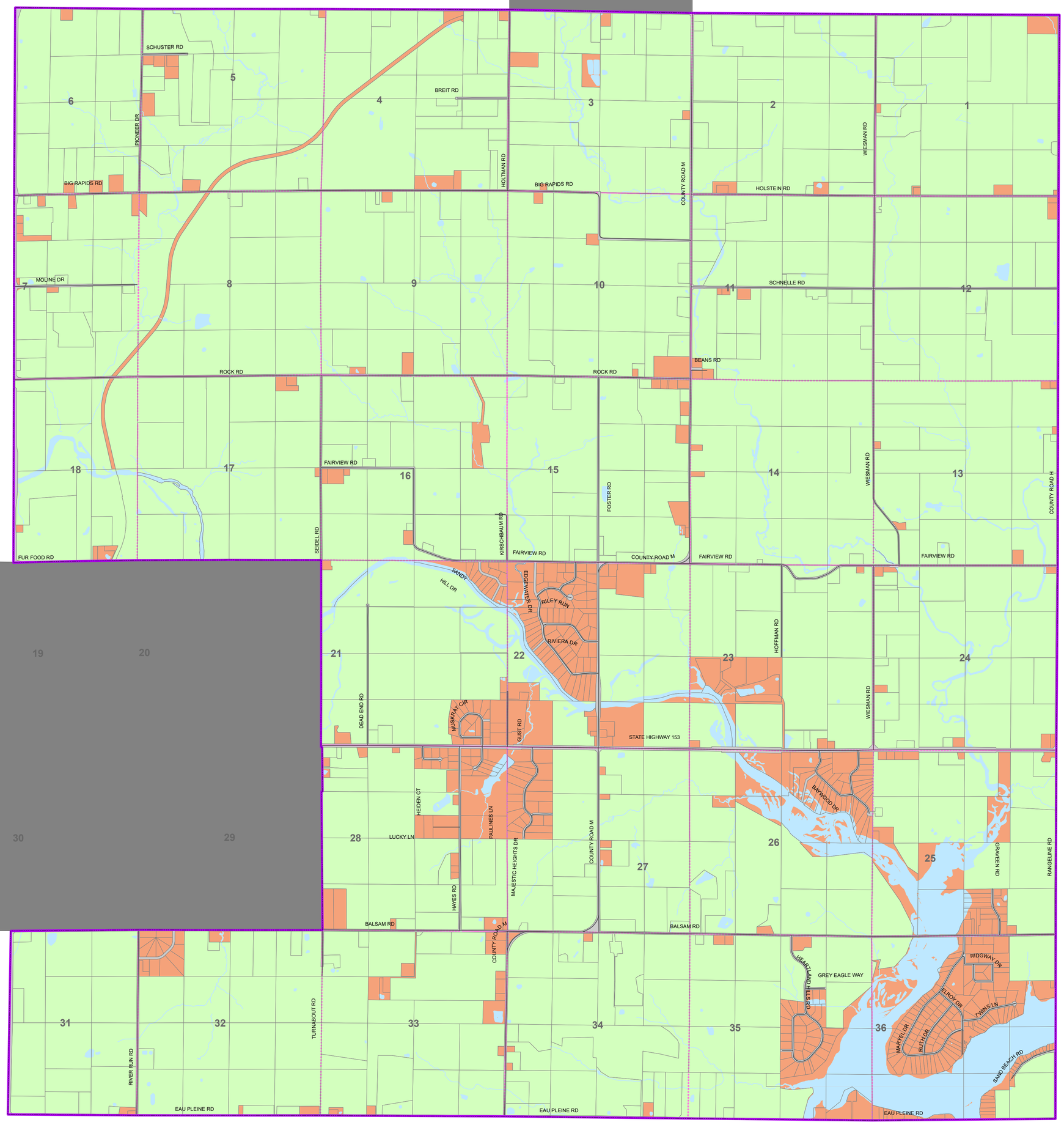
Town of Cleveland

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

V. OF FENWOOD

V. OF STRATFORD

SCHUSTER RD
BREIT RD
PIONEER DR
HOLTMAN RD
BIG RAPIDS RD
COUNTY ROAD M
WIESMAN RD
HOLSTEIN RD
MOLINE DR
SCHNELLE RD
ROCK RD
BEANS RD
FAIRVIEW RD
FOSTER RD
COUNTY ROAD H
FUR FOOD RD
SEIDEL RD
KIRSCHBAUM RD
SANDY HILL DR
EDGEWATER DR
RILEY RUN
RIVIERA DR
HOFFMAN RD
DEAD END RD
MUSKRAT CIR
GUST RD
STATE HIGHWAY 153
HEDEN CT
PAULINES LN
LUCKY LN
HAYES RD
MAJESTIC HEIGHTS DR
BAYWOOD DR
GRAVEEN RD
RANGELINE RD
BALSAM RD
HEARTLAND HILLS RD
GREY EAGLE WAY
RIDGWAY DR
ELROY DR
TWINS LN
MARYEL DR
RUTH DR
SAND BEACH RD
RIVER RUN RD
TURNABOUT RD
EAU PLEINE RD

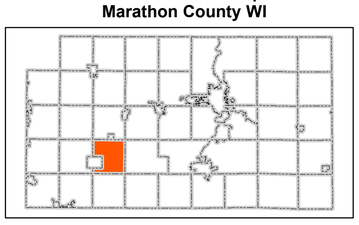


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

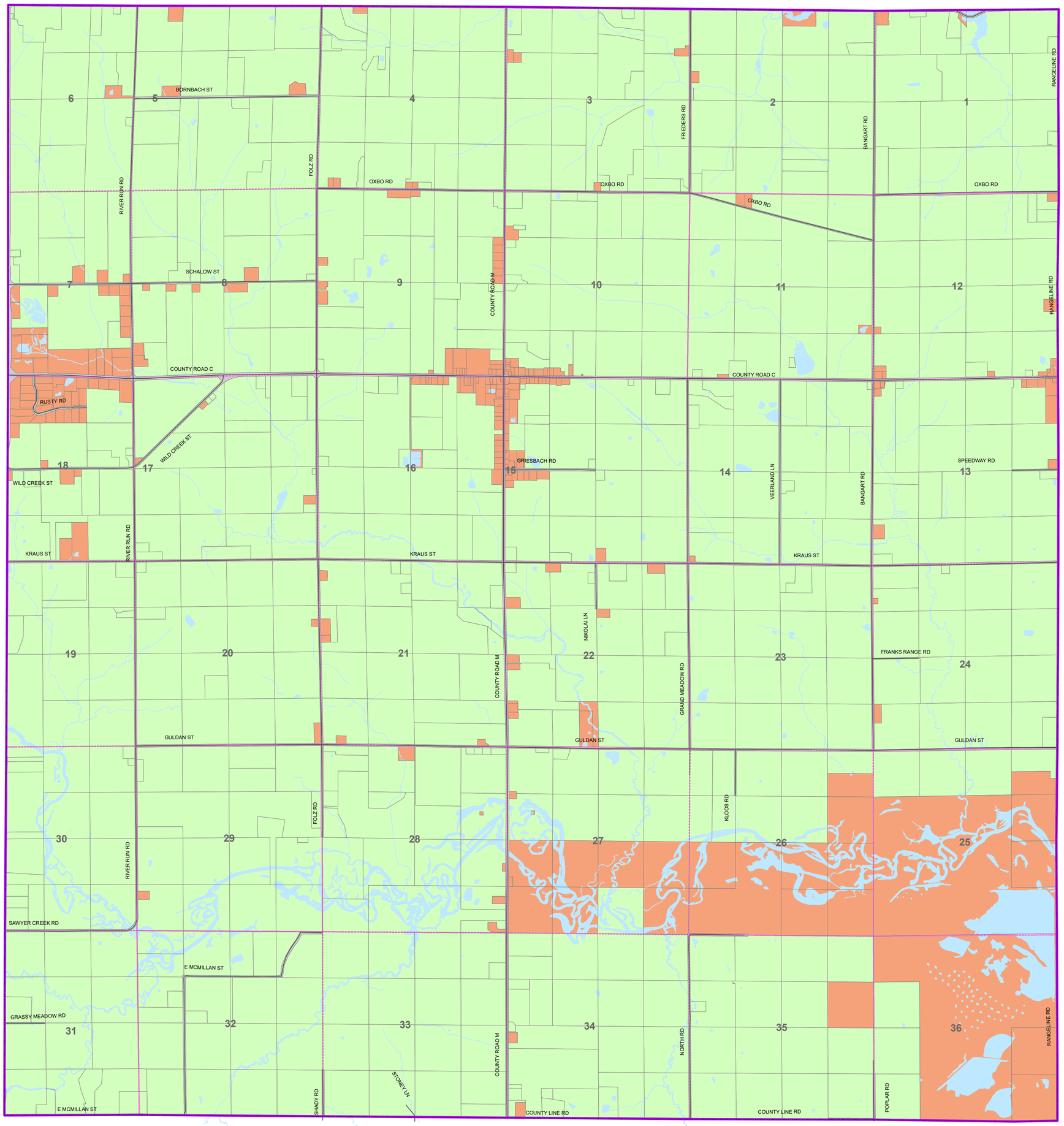
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Day

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

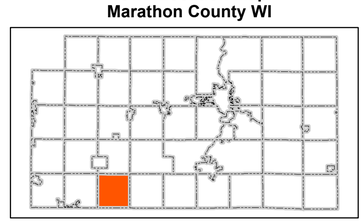


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

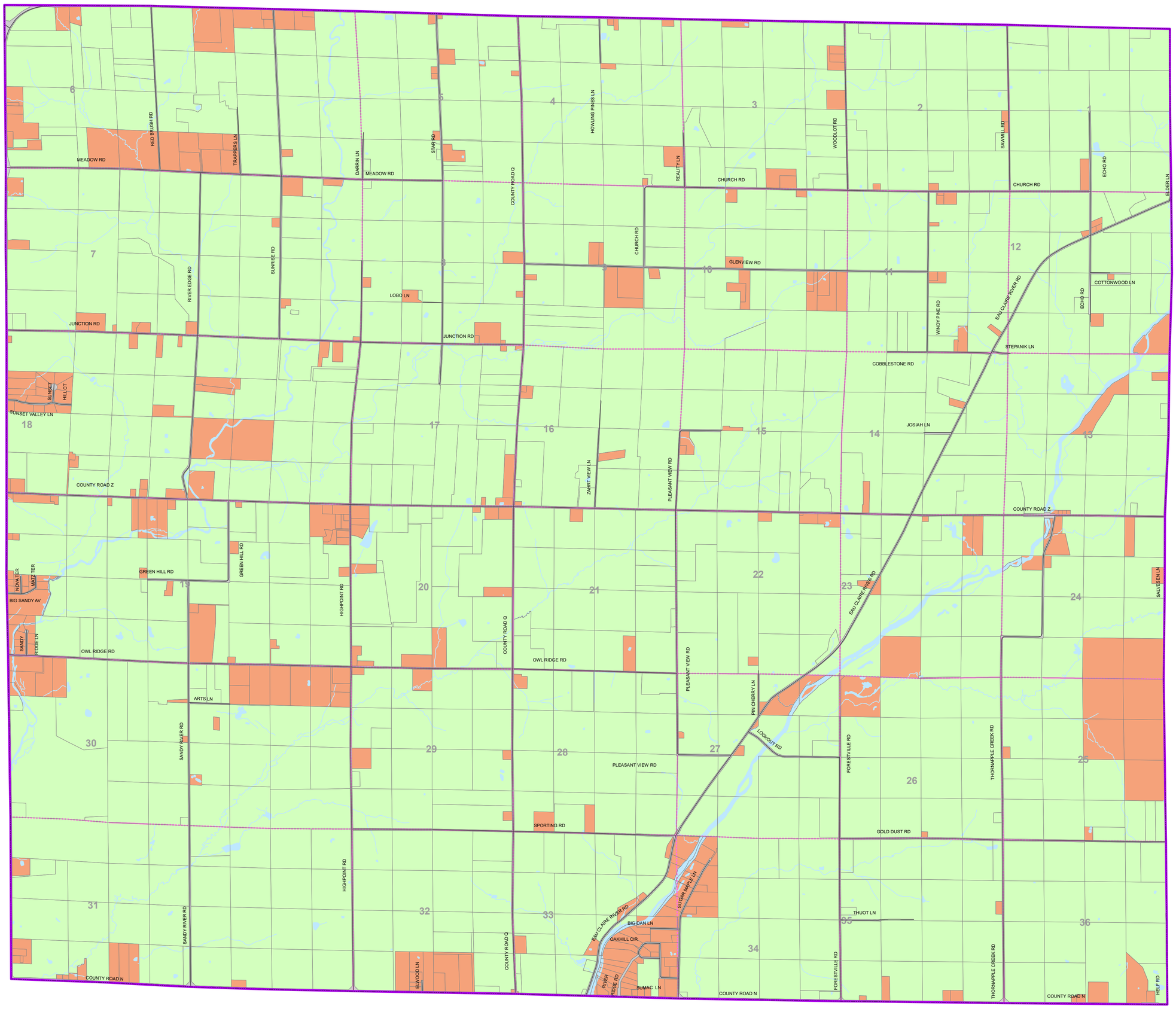
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Marathon County

Town of Easton

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

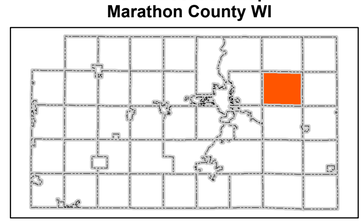


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

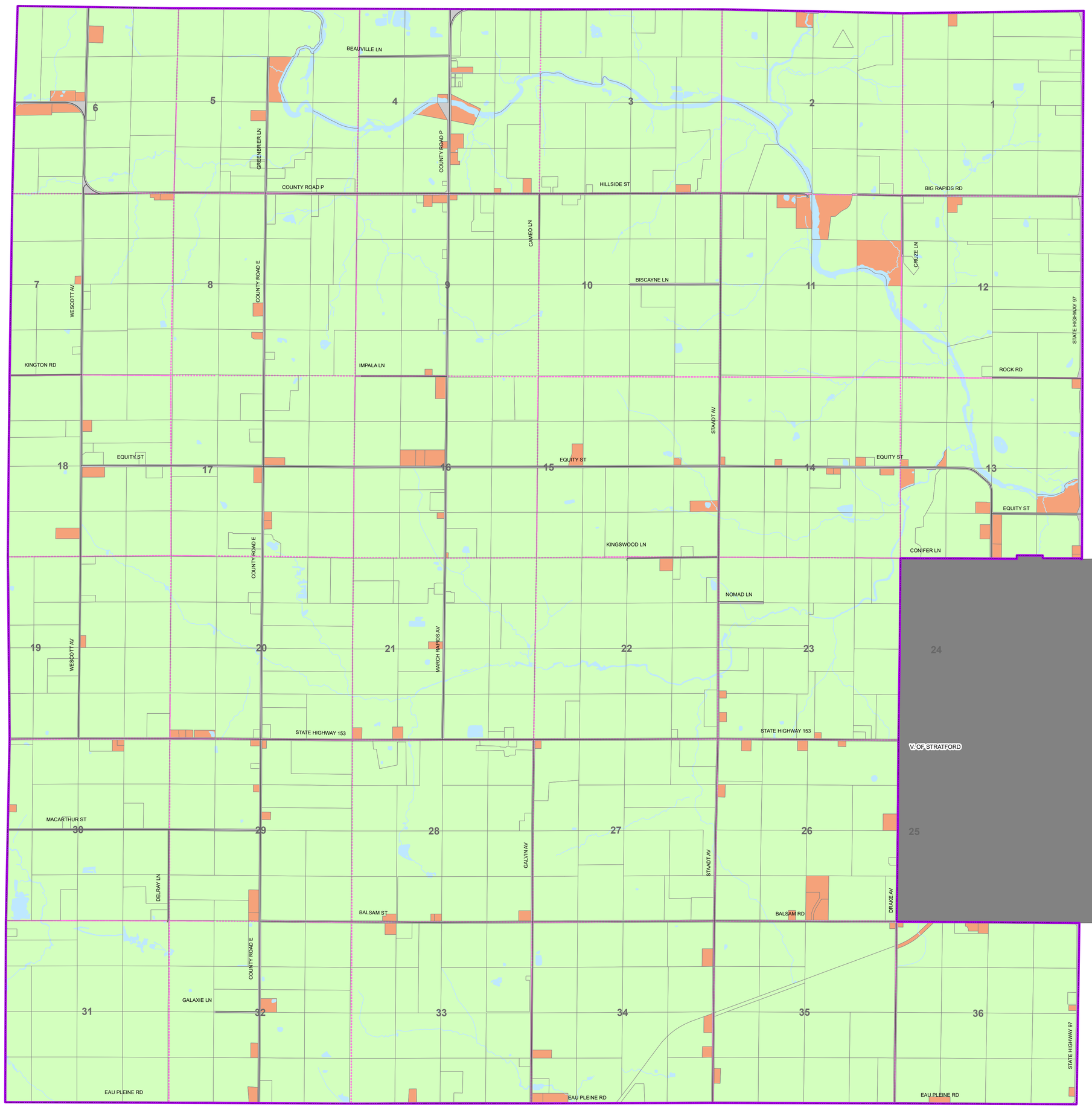
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Marathon County

Town of Eau Pleine

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

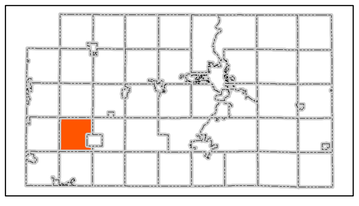


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

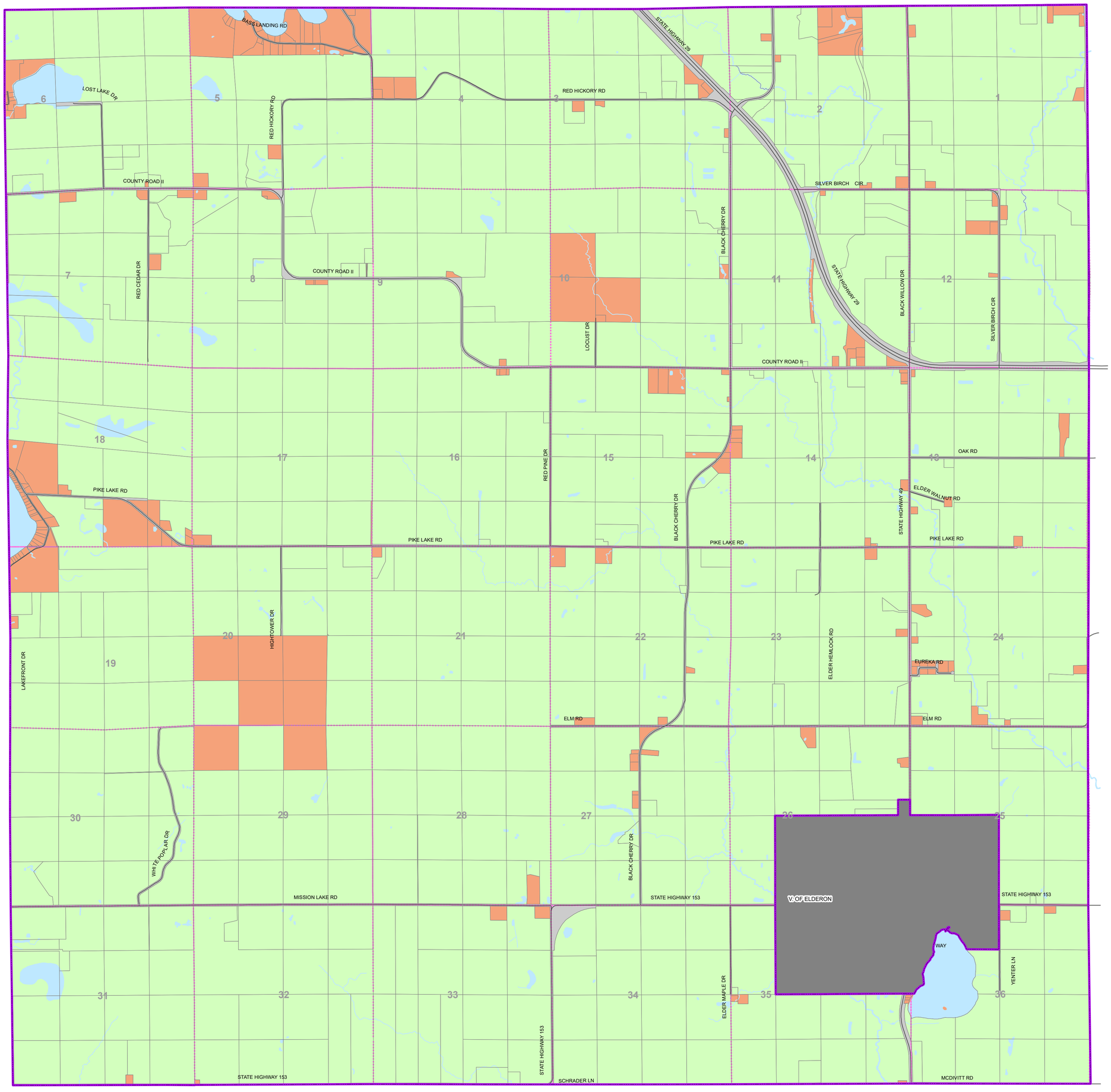
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Elderon

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

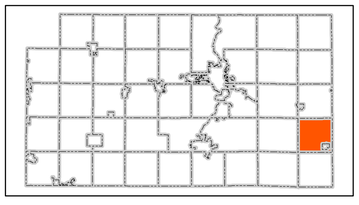


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

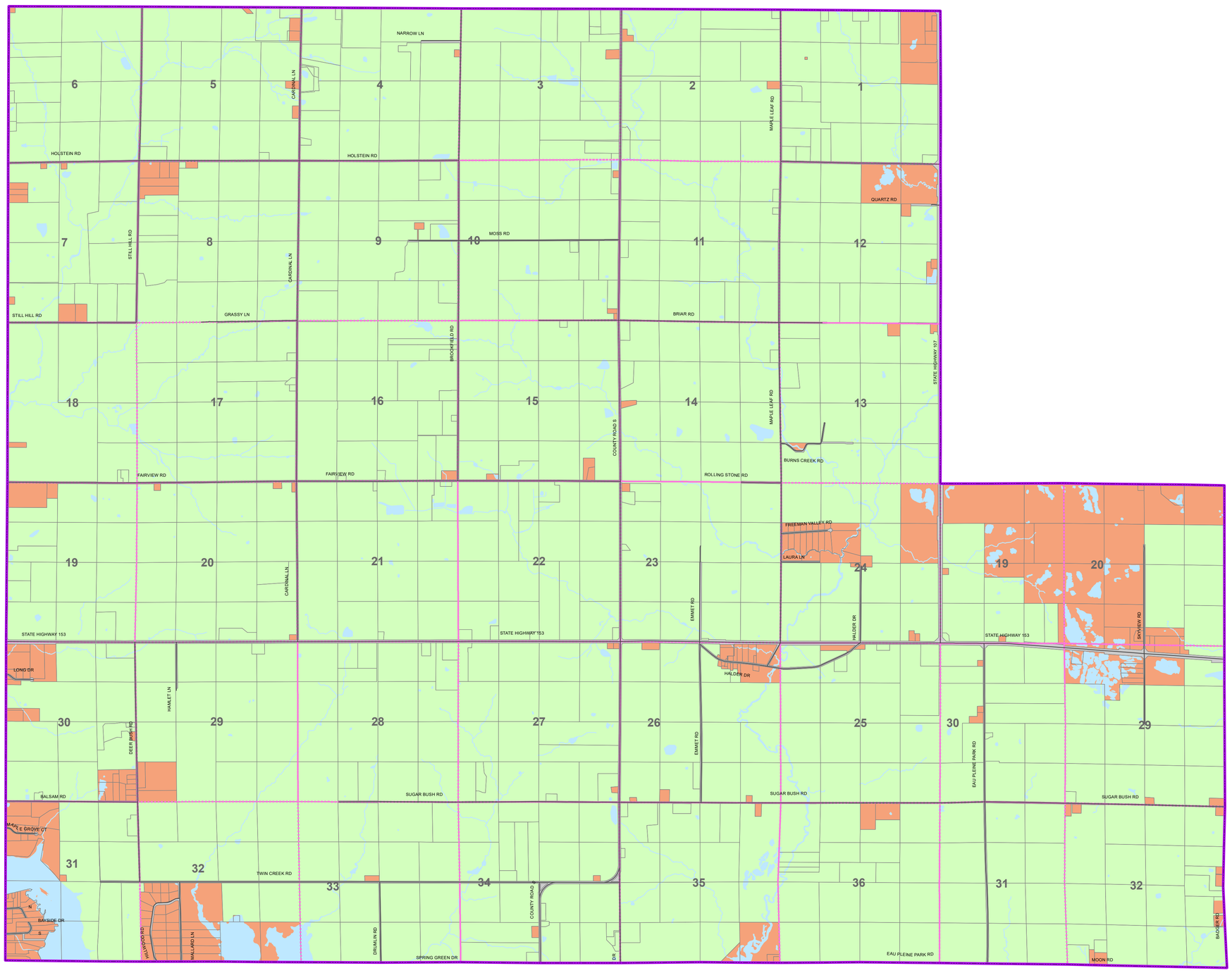
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Marathon County

Town of Emmet

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

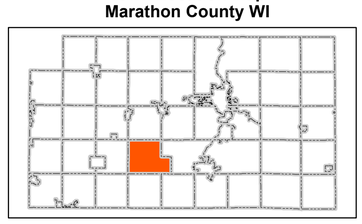


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

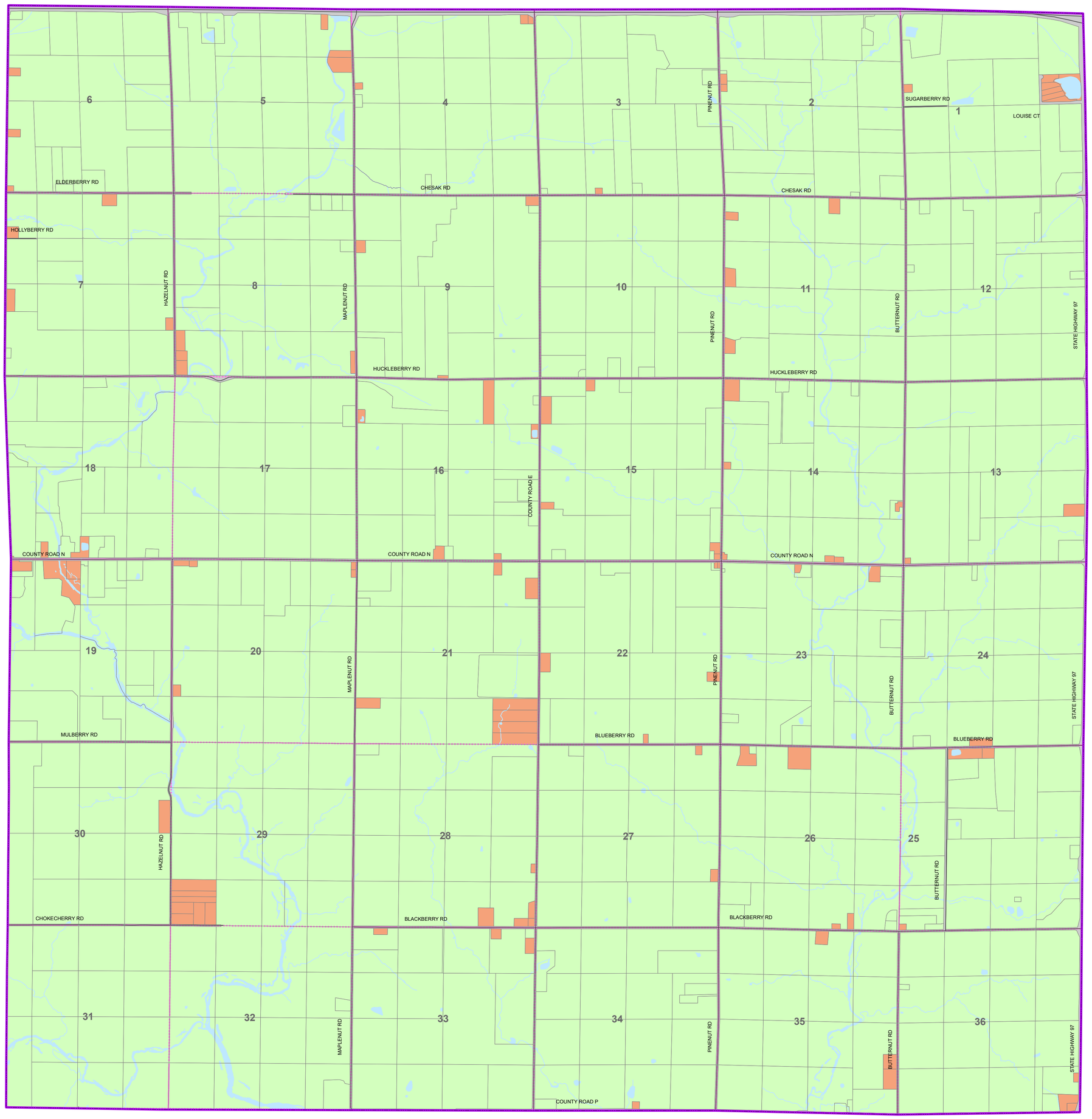
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Frankfort

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

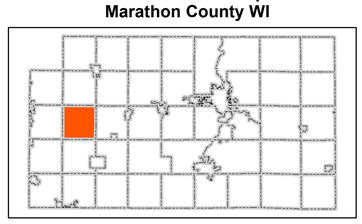


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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3,000 1,500 0 3,000 Feet

Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

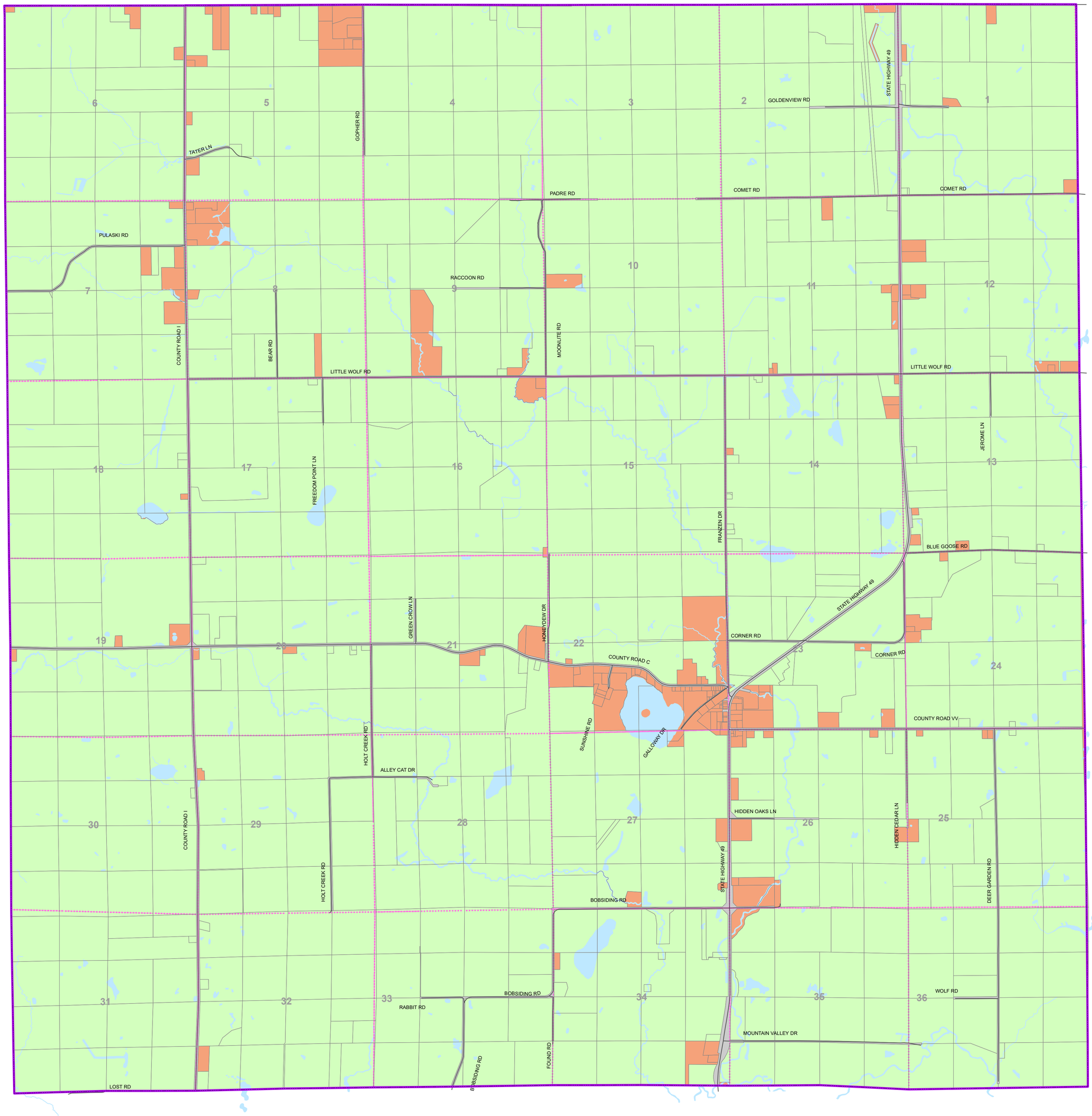
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Franzen

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

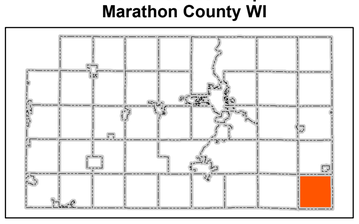


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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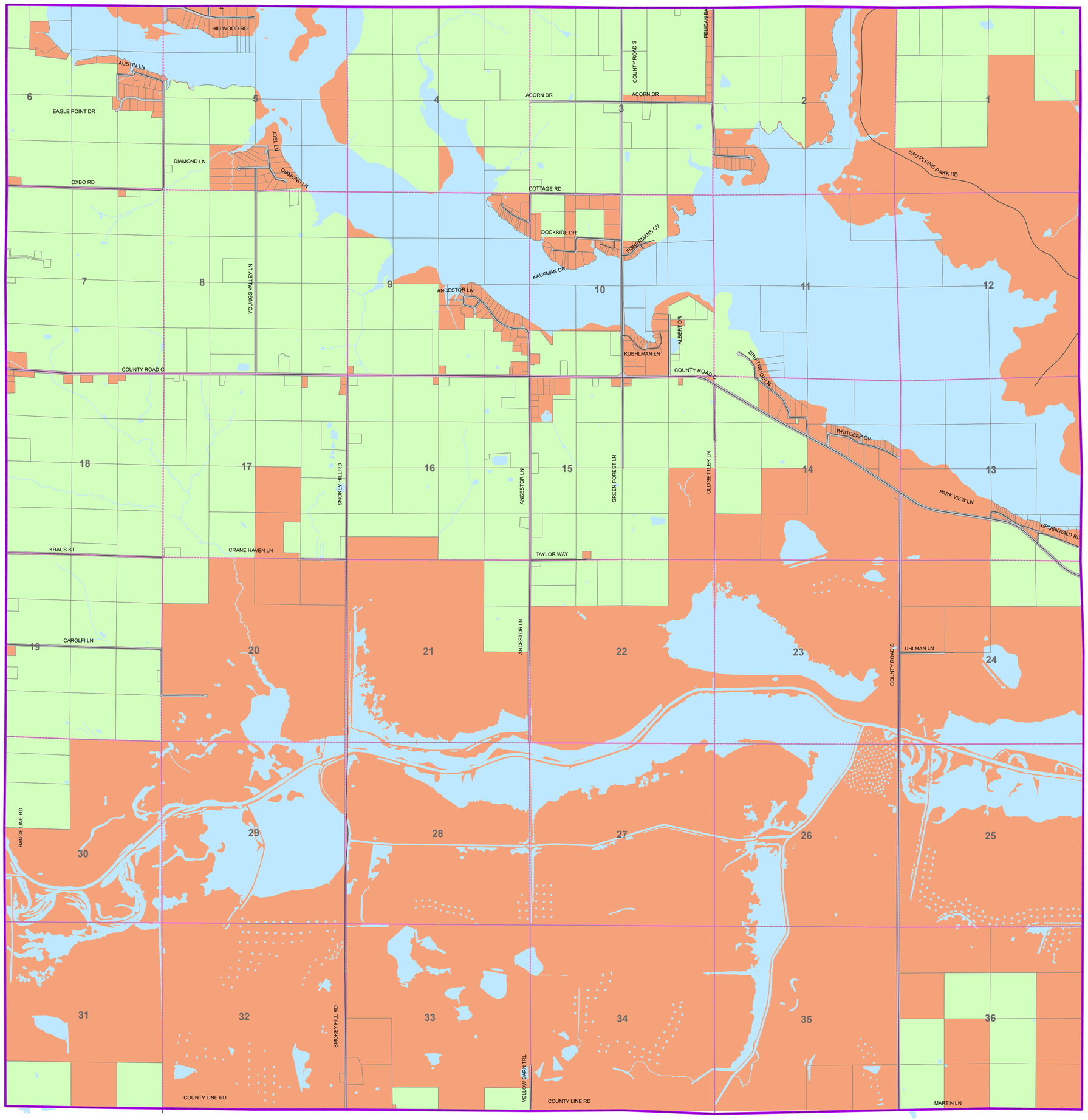
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Marathon County

Town of Green Valley

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

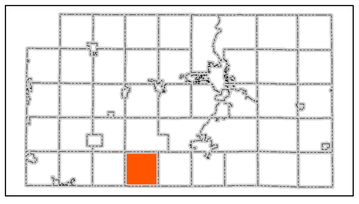


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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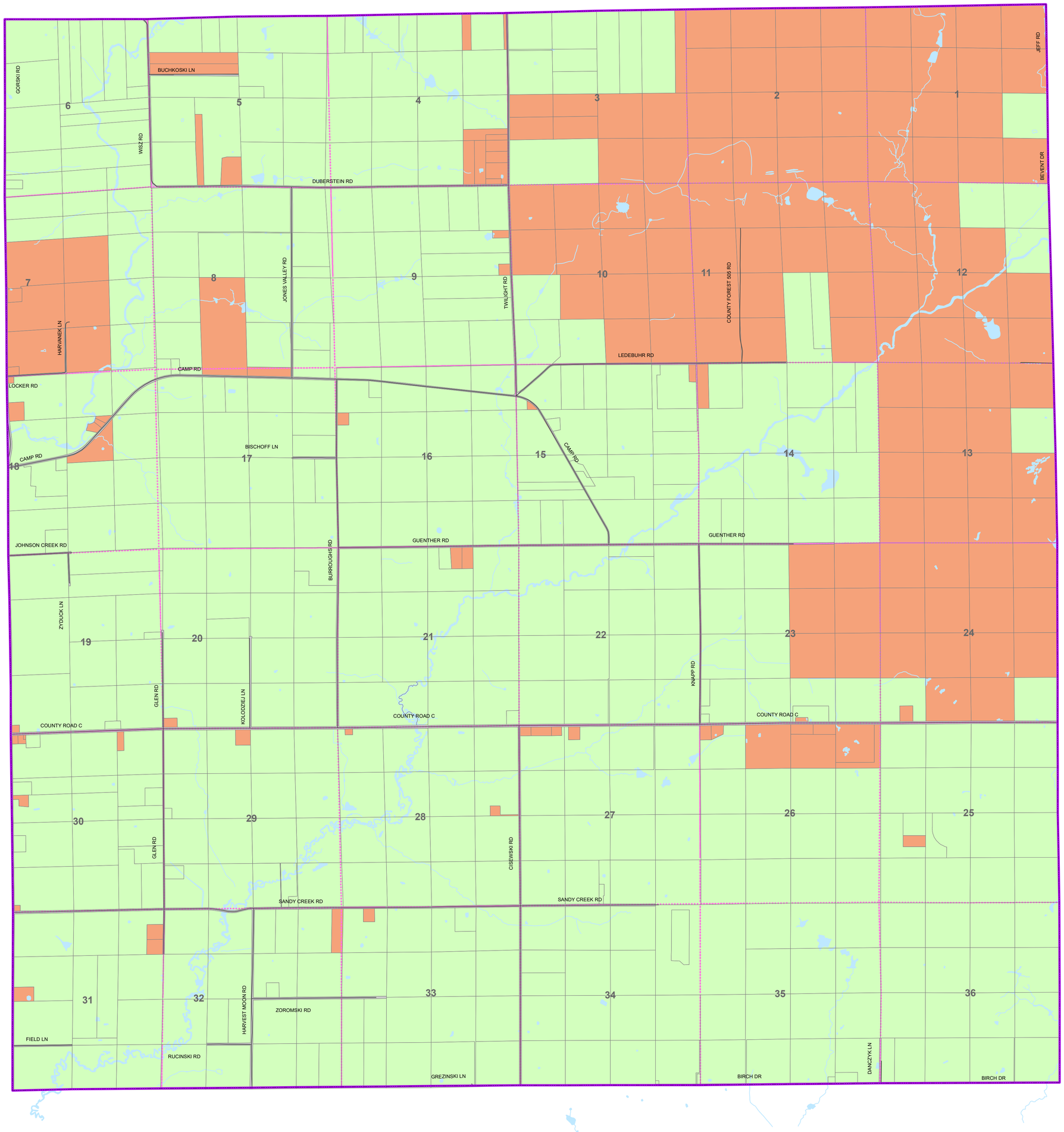
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Marathon County

Town of Guenther

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

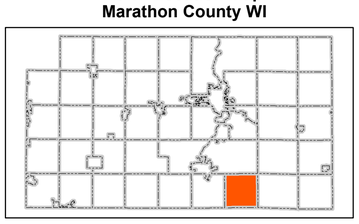


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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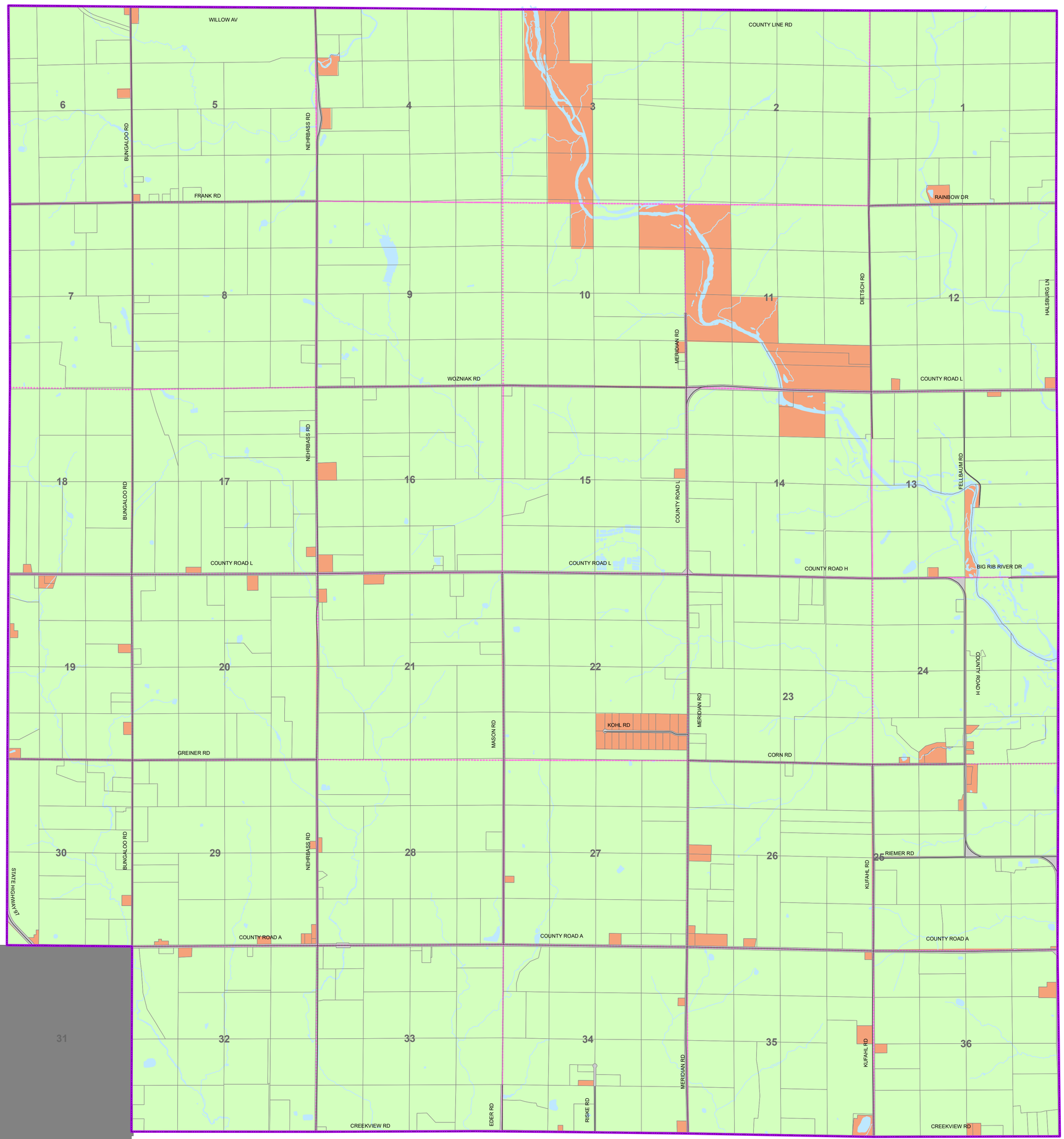
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Marathon County

Town of Halsey

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

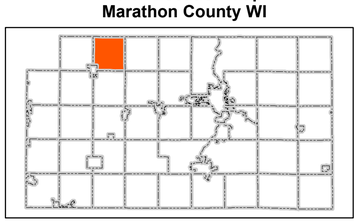


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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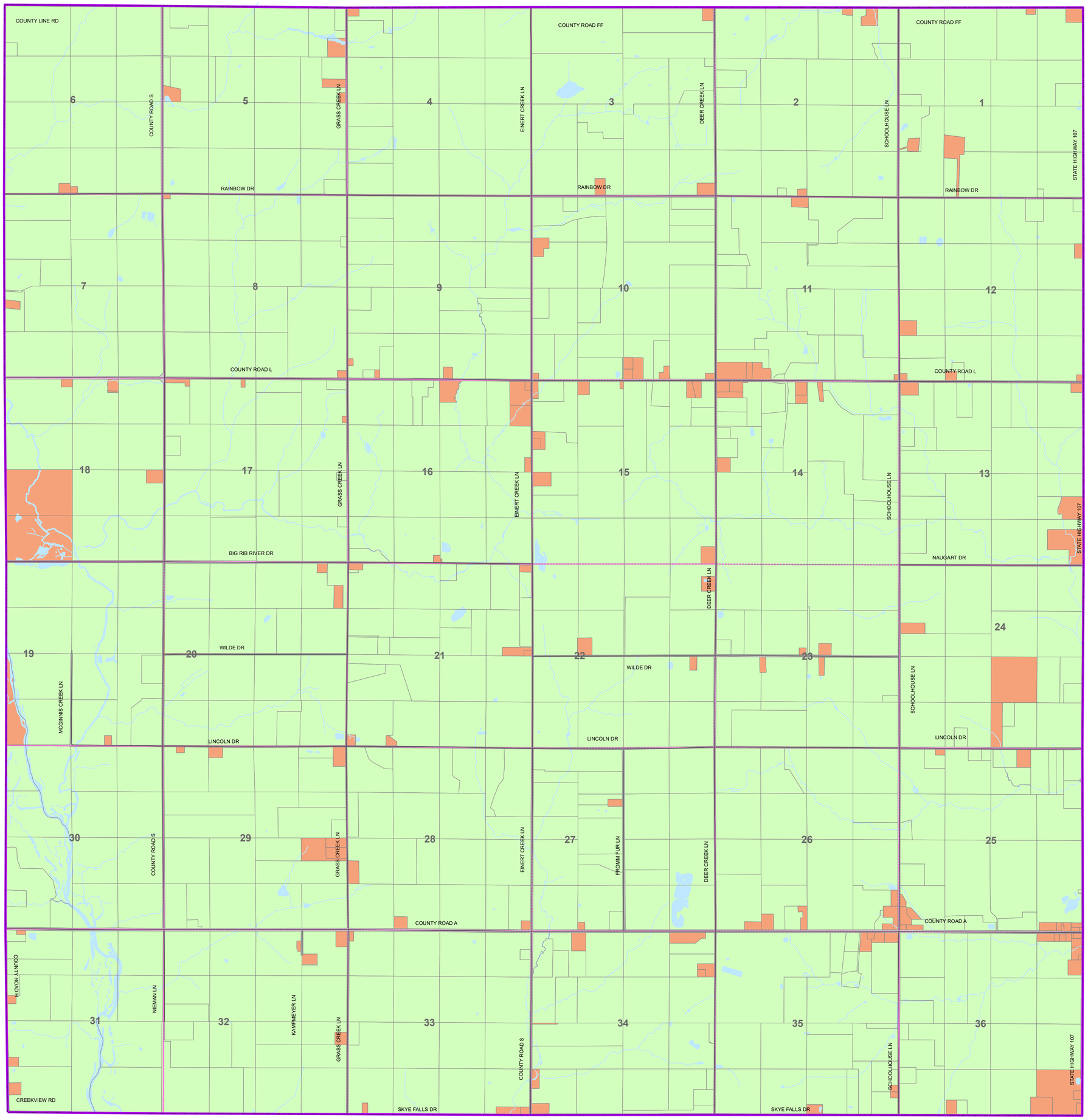
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Marathon County

Town of Hamburg

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

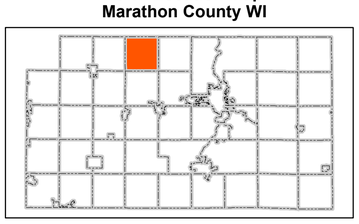


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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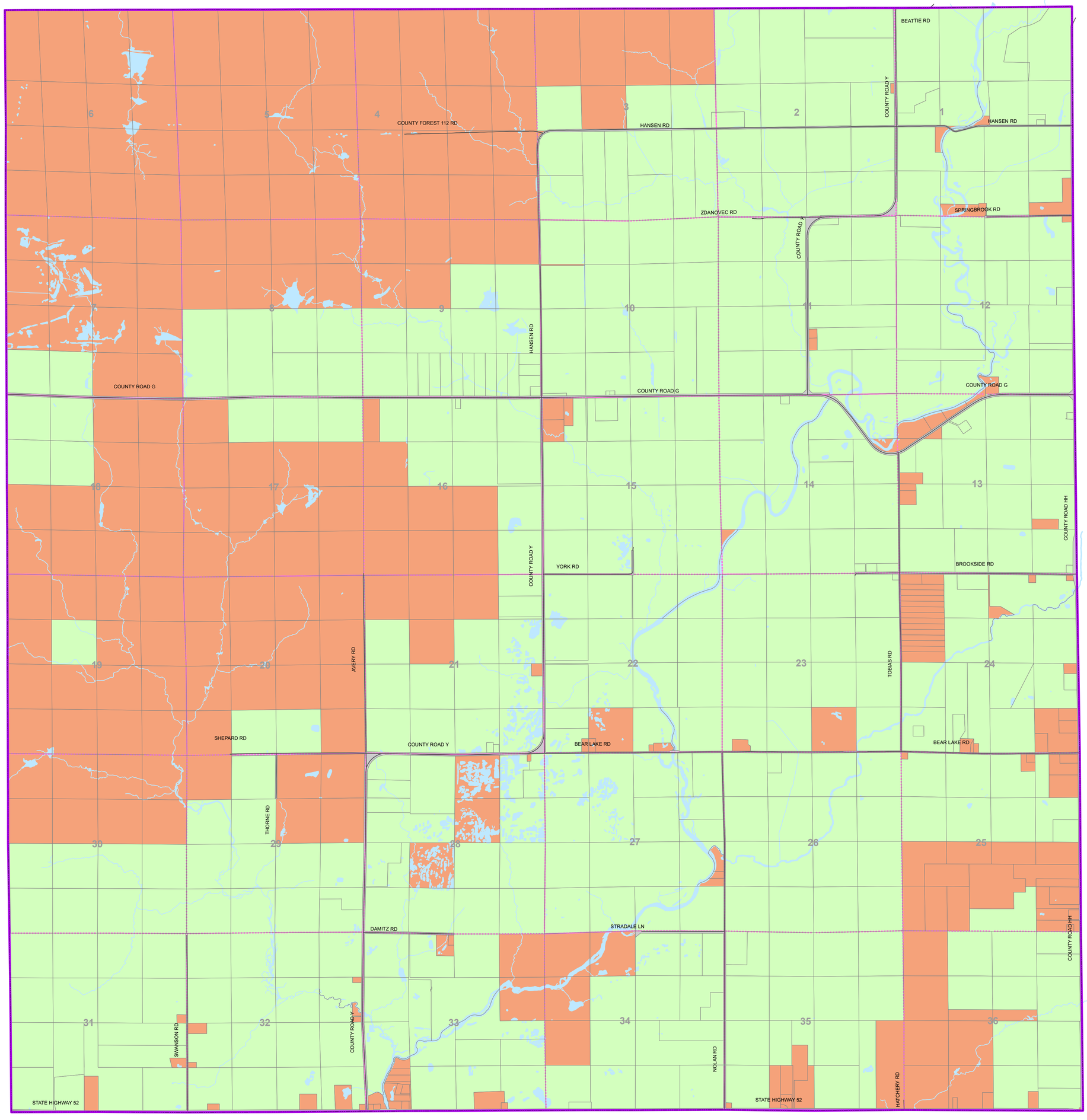
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Marathon County

Town of Harrison

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

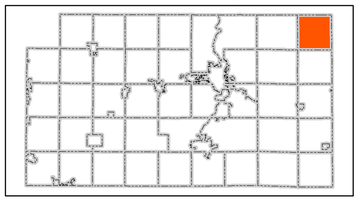


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- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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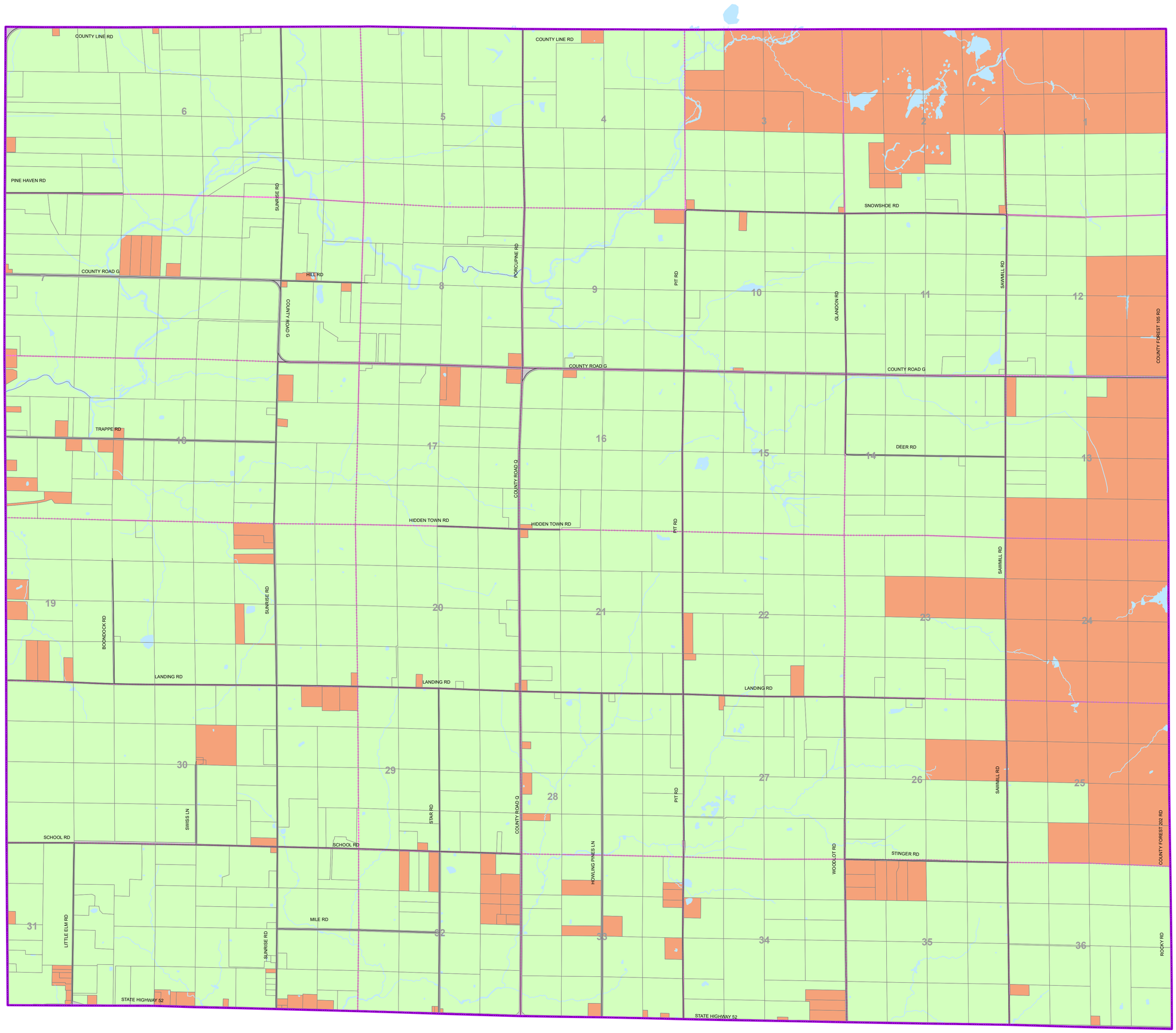
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Marathon County

Town of Hewitt

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

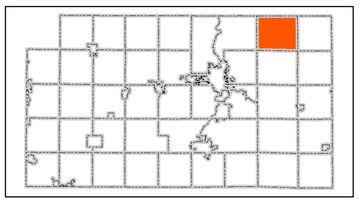


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- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

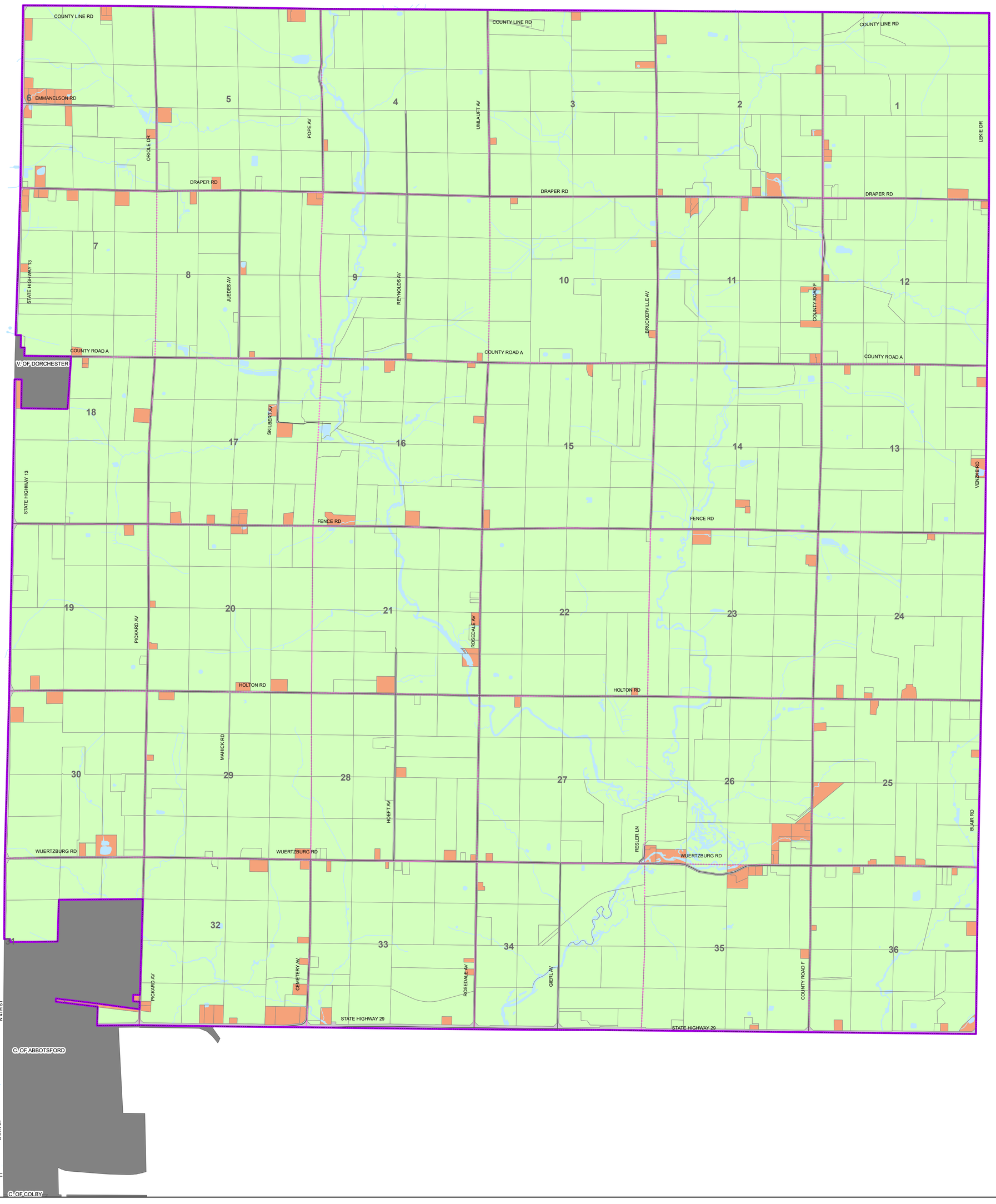
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Marathon County

Town of Holton

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

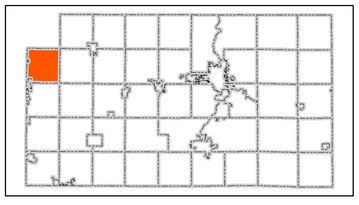


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

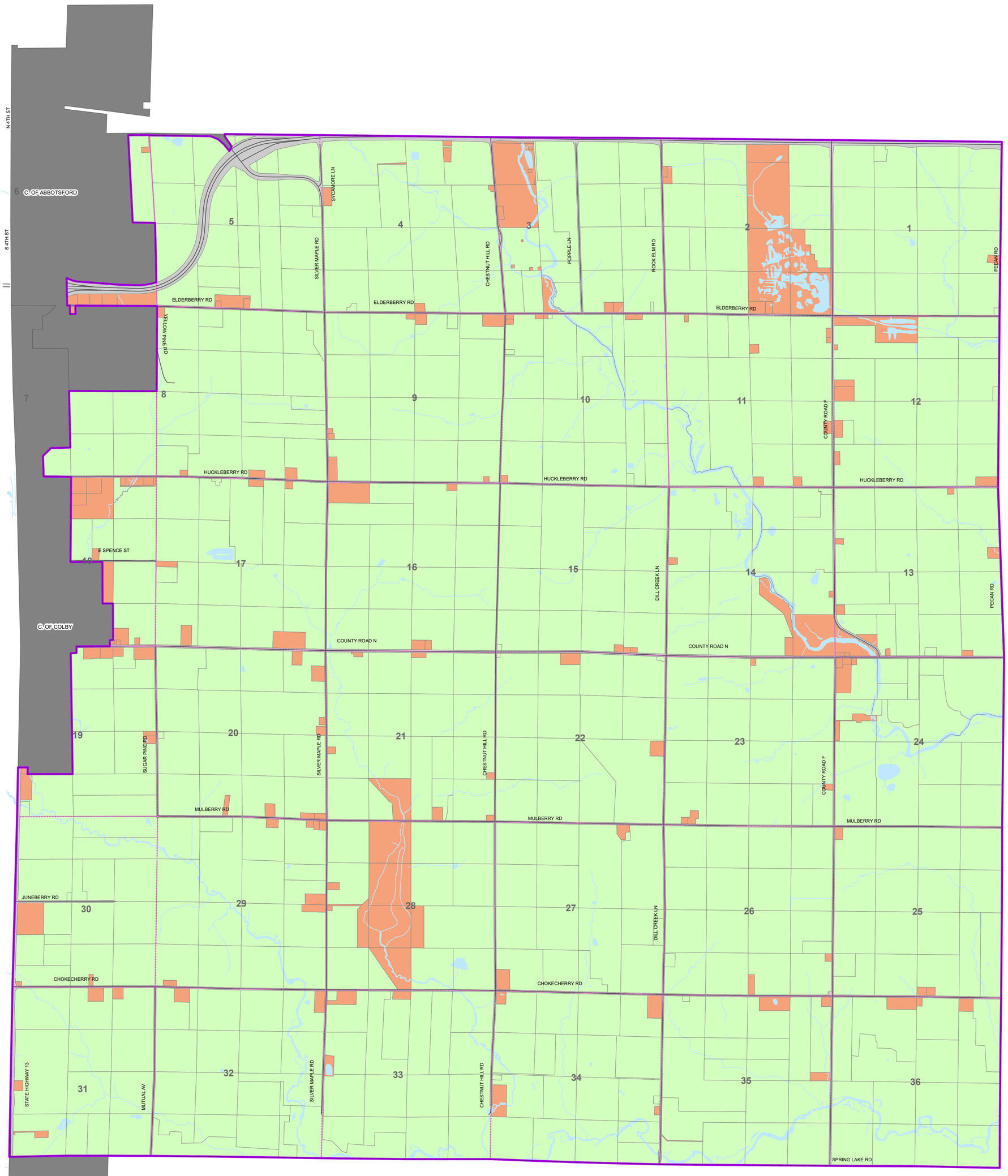
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Marathon County

Town of Hull

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

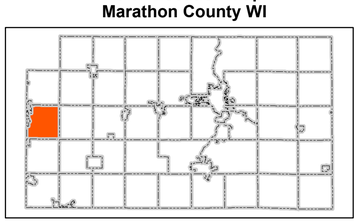


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- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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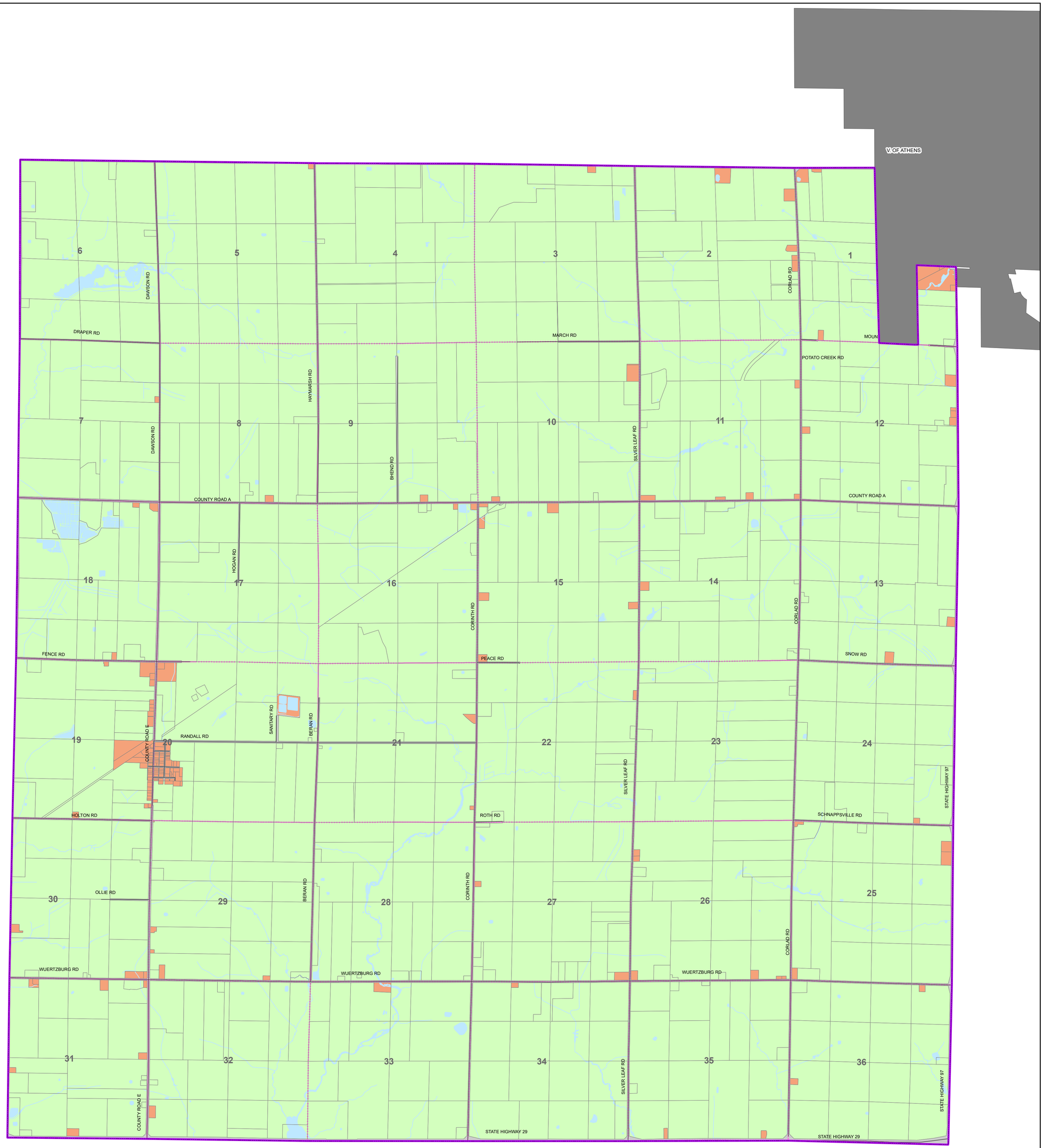
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Marathon County

Town of Johnson

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

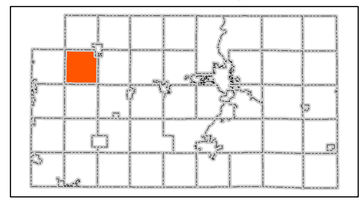


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- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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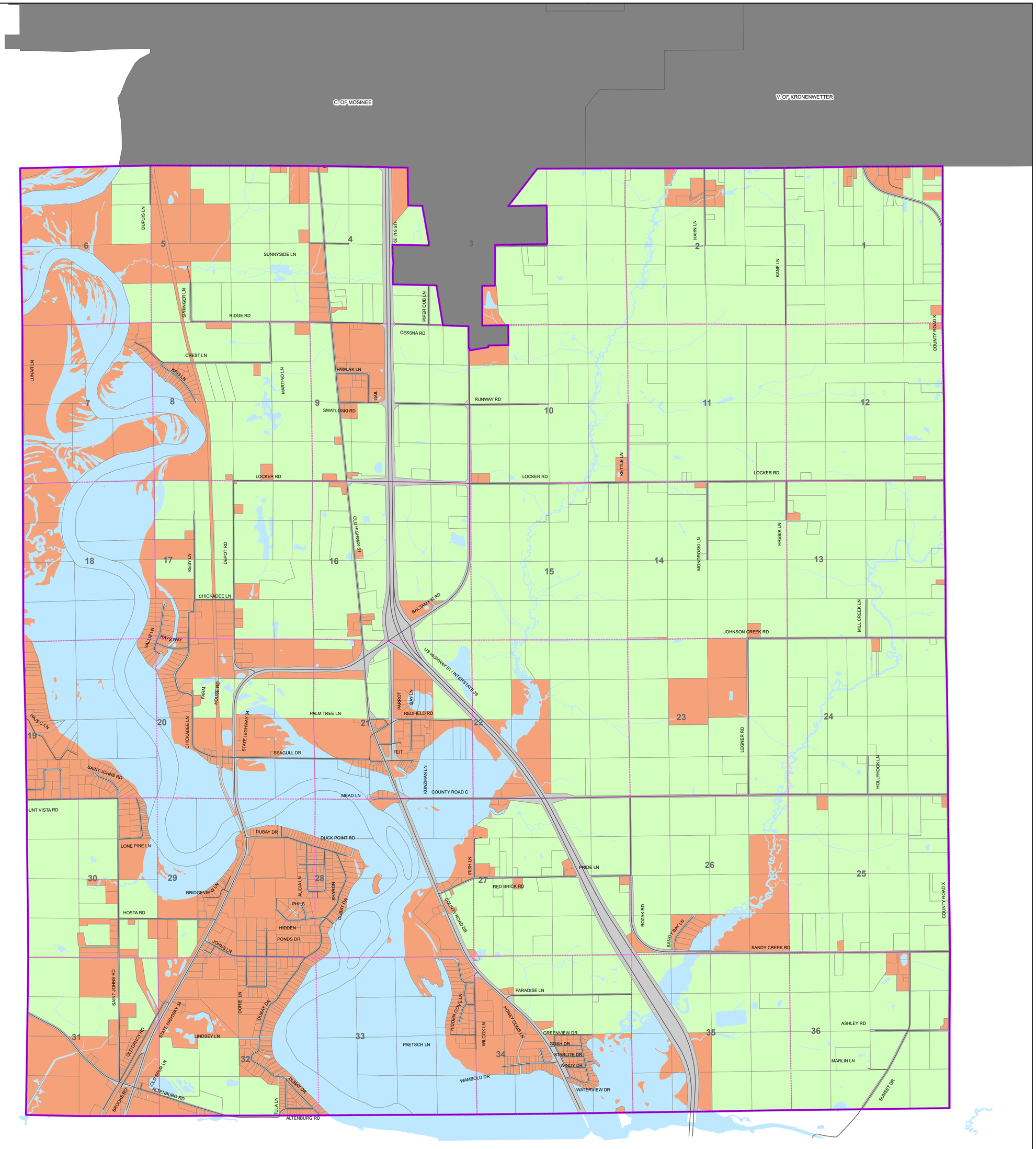
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Marathon County

Town of Knowlton

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

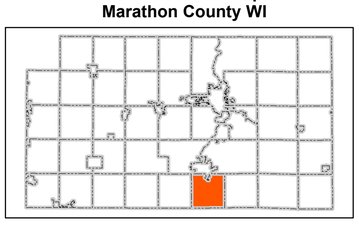


2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Areas
Parcels
Sections (est.)
Roads
Water Features

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3,000 1,500 0 3,000 Feet

Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

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Marathon County

Town of Marathon

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

C. OF WAUSAU

V. OF MARATHON CITY

V. OF RIB MOUNTAIN

PACKER DR
144TH AV
154TH
COUNTY ROAD NN
4TH ST
WHIPPOORWILL RD
COUNTY ROAD NN
COUNTY ROAD NN
CREEKSIDE RD
OUTH
KENNEDY CREEK RD
COUNTY ROAD B
BURLWOOD RD
CURLY MAPLE RD
HOLLYWOOD RD
CHARLEY RD
KEITH RD
VINE CT
MARATHON RD
PERTH RD
COUNTY ROAD O
BURR OAK RD
LANDWEHR DR
CRABAPPLE RD
COUNTY ROAD N
COUNTY ROAD N
COUNTY ROAD N
LAURIE ANN LN
SHERAH DR
CHRISTOPHER CIR
COUNTY ROAD B
GREENTREE RD
MARATHON RD
MIDPOINT RD
EDS RD
DEER TRAIL LN
SQUIRREL LN
ALPINE RD
ALPINE RD
HARD ROCK RD
COUNTY ROAD B
COUNTY ROAD O
FOUR MILE RD
FOUR MILE RD
COUNTY FOREST 702 RD
FOUR MILE RD
GREENTREE RD
HOLLYWOOD RD
AHRENS RD
AHRENS RD

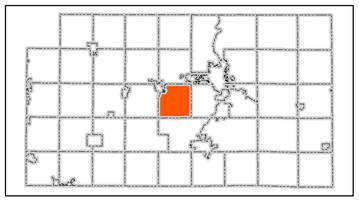
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2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Areas
Parcels
Sections (est.)
Roads
Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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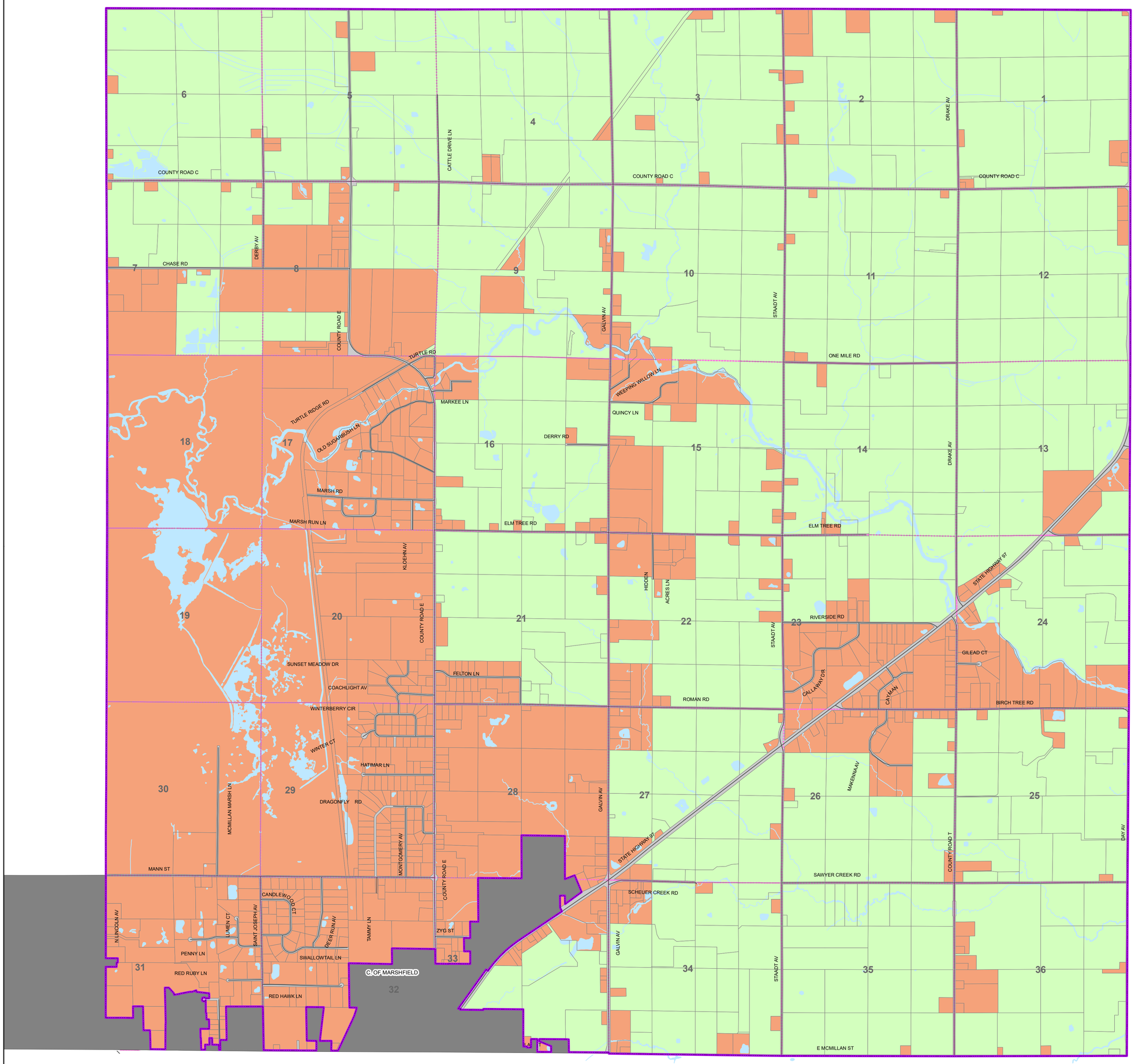
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Marathon County

Town of McMillan

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

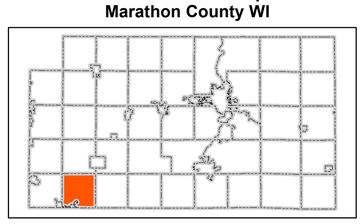


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3,000 1,500 0 3,000 Feet

Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



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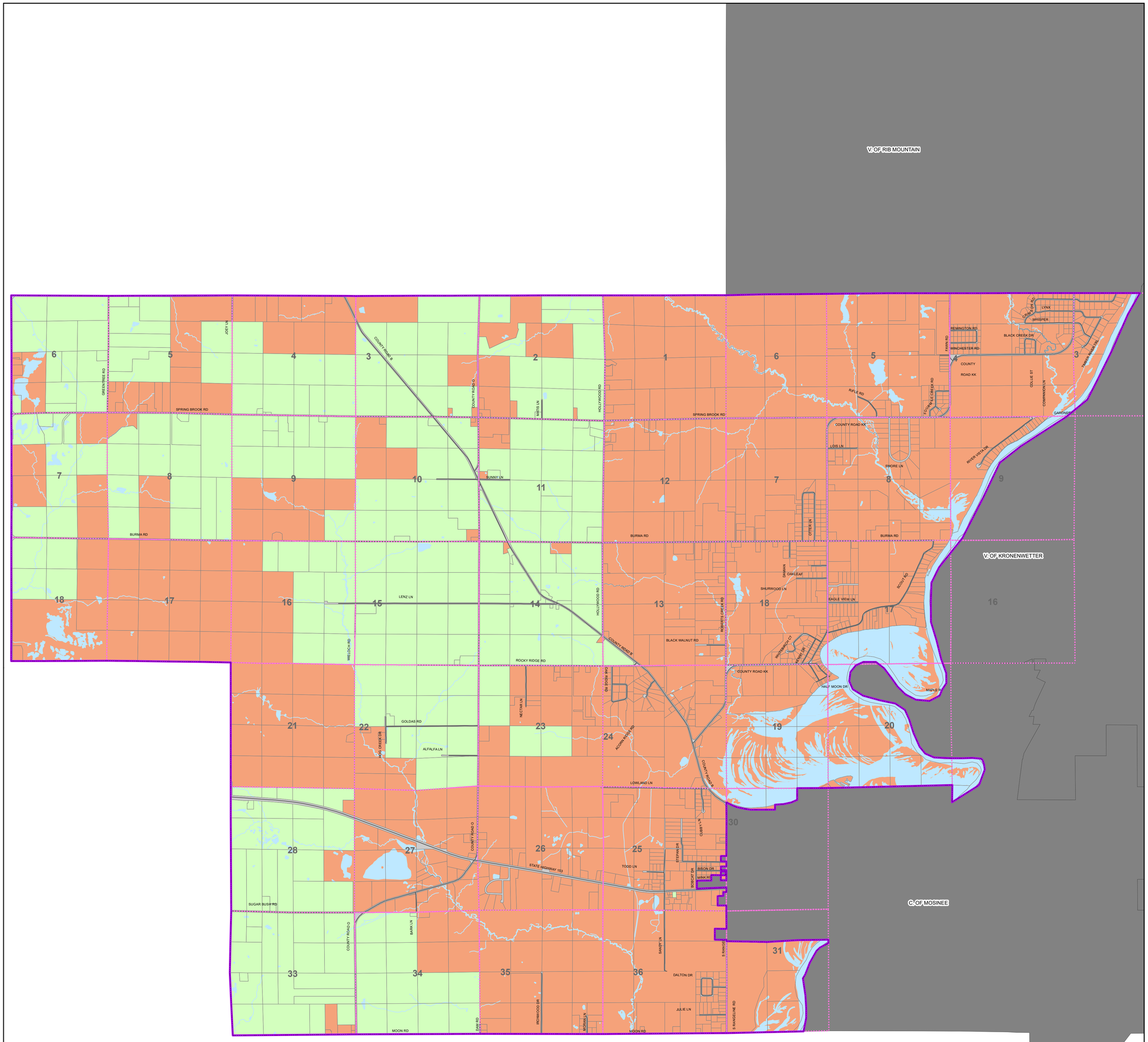
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Marathon County

Town of Mosinee

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

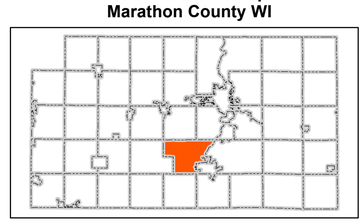


2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Areas
Parcels
Sections (est.)
Roads
Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



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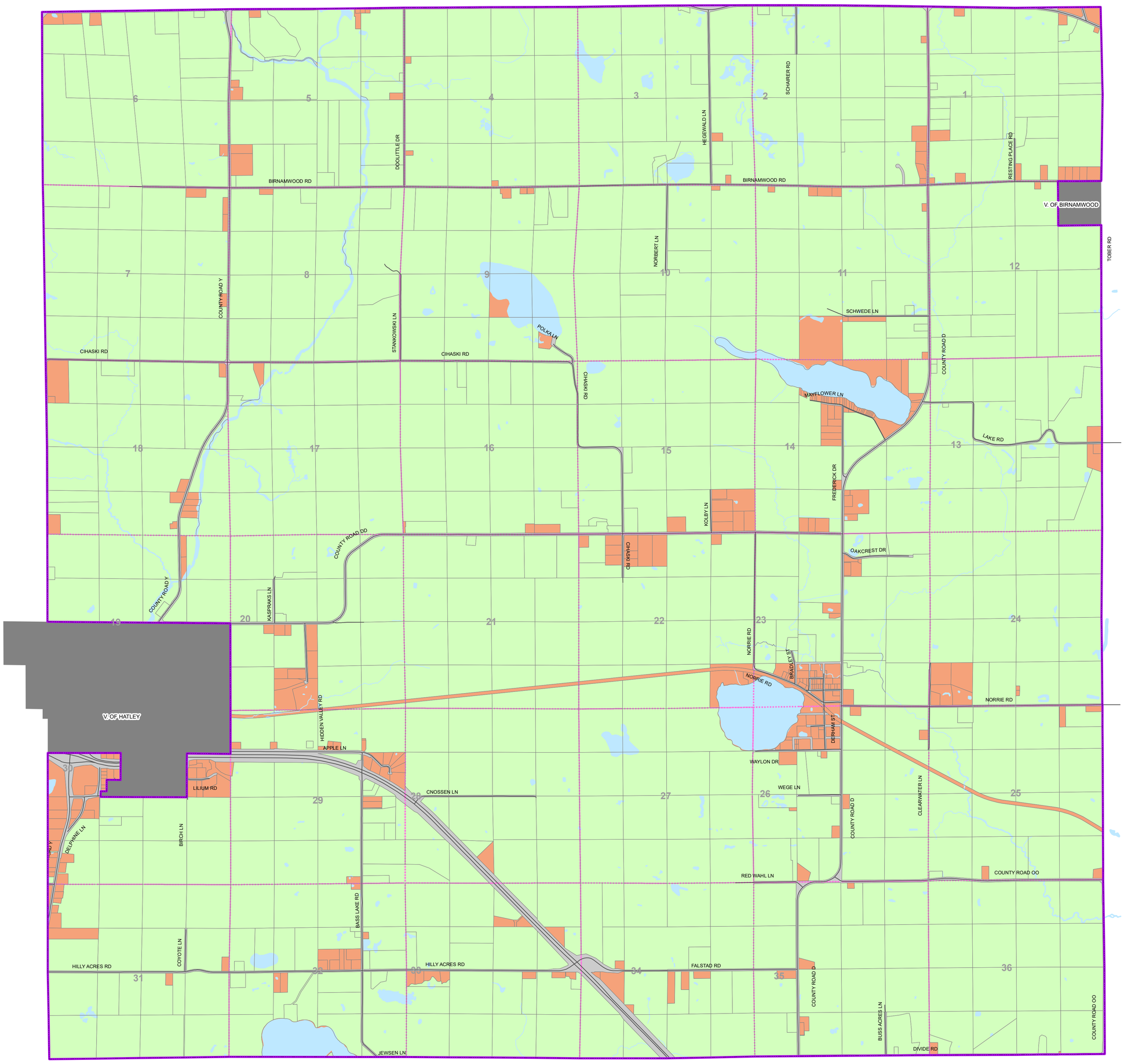
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Marathon County

Town of Norrie

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

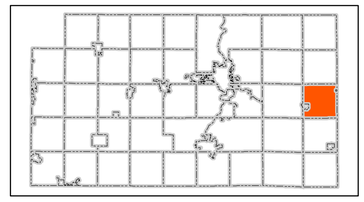


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



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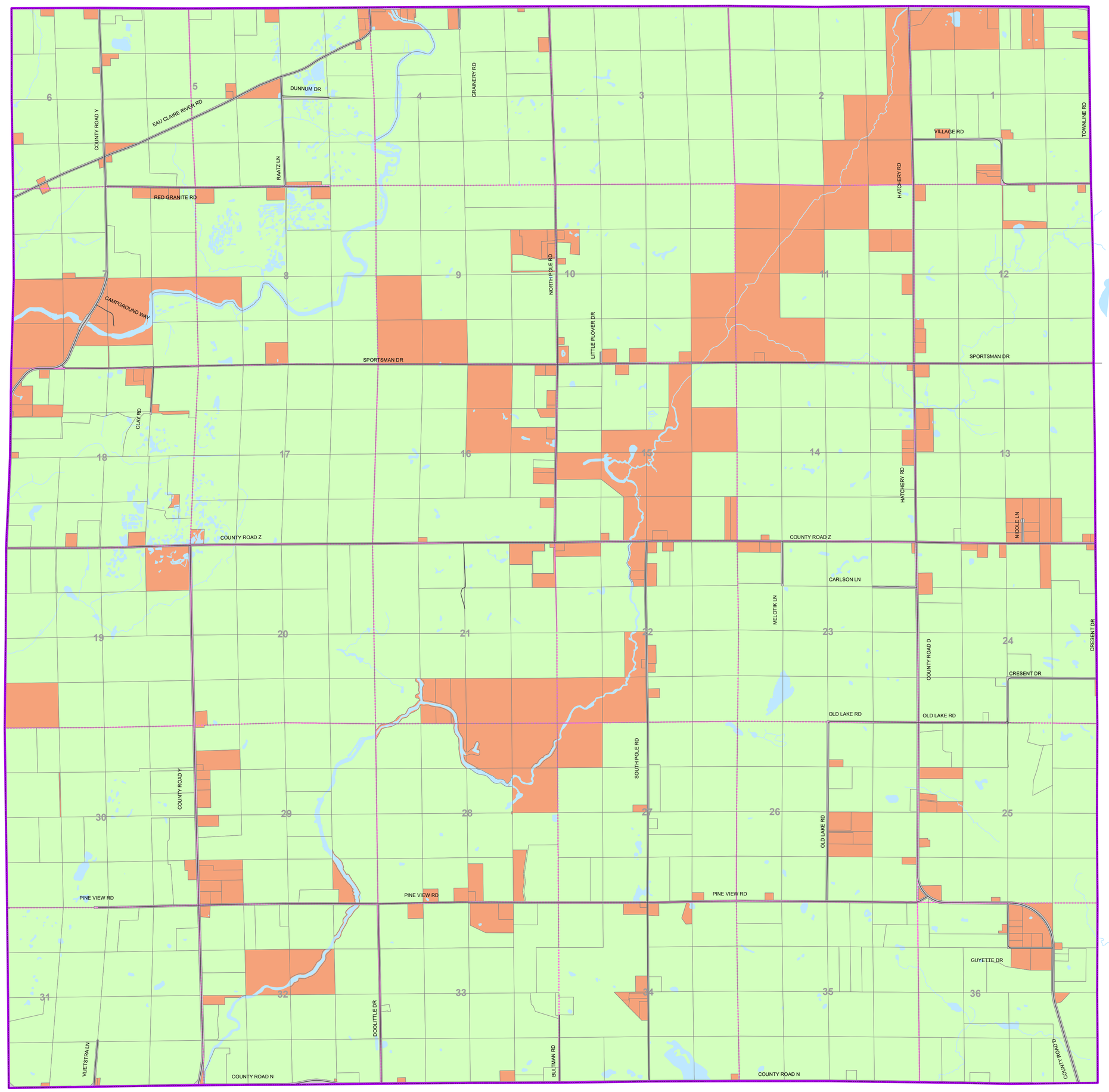
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Marathon County

Town of Plover

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

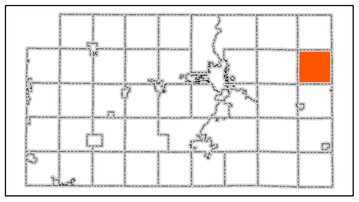


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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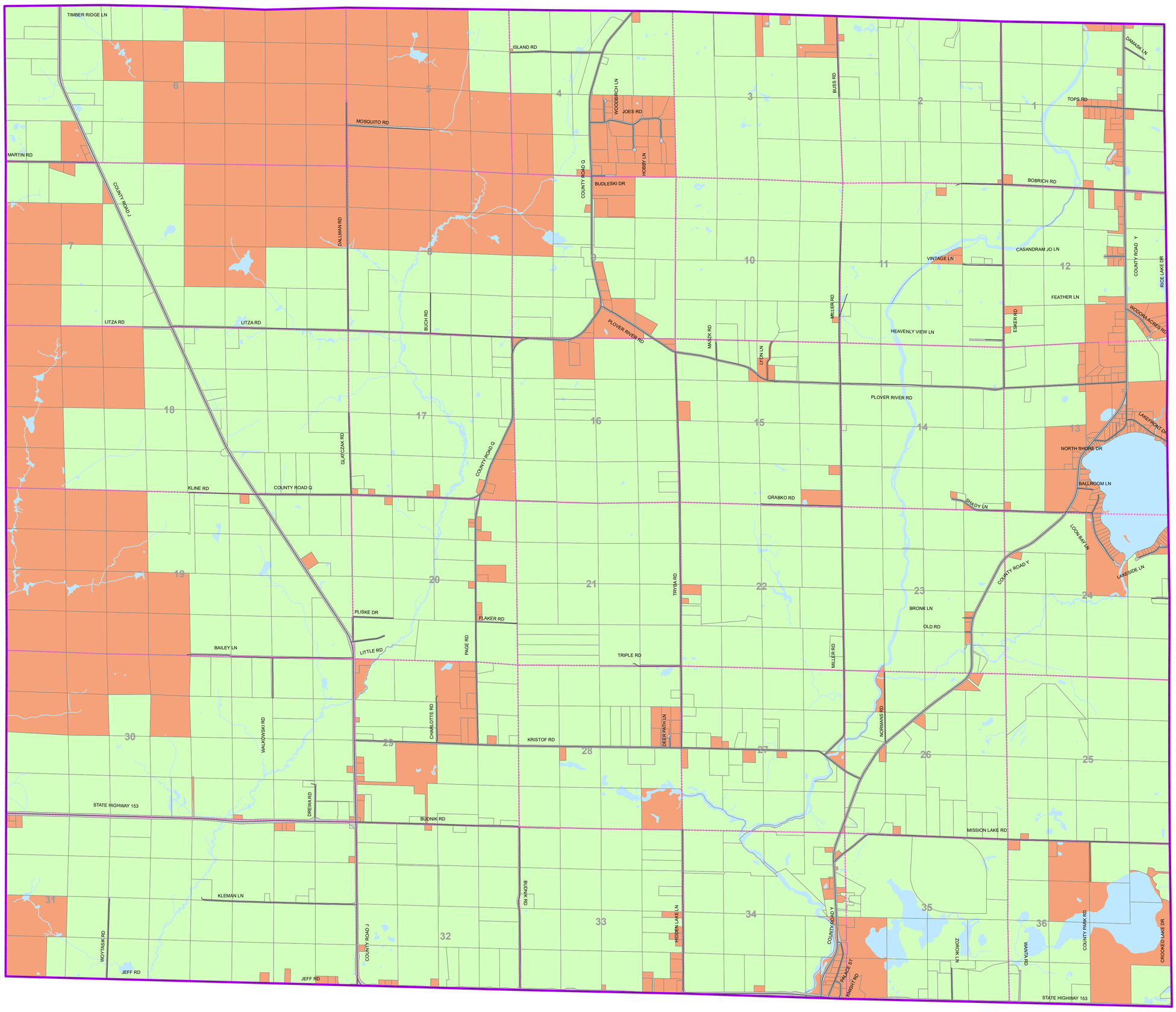
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Marathon County

Town of Reid

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

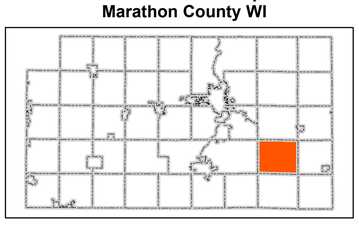


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3,300 1,650 0 3,300 Feet

Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

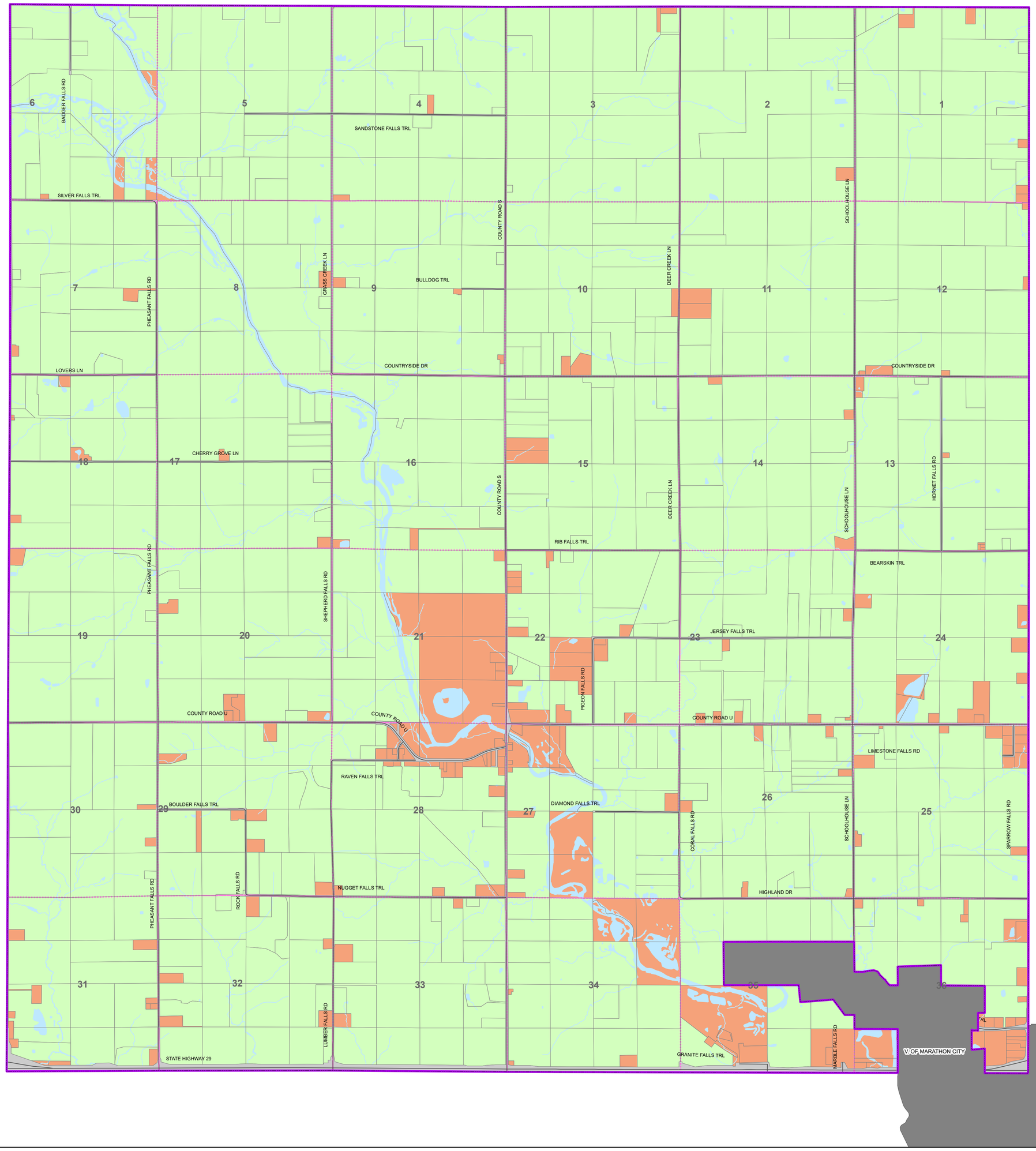
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Rib Falls

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

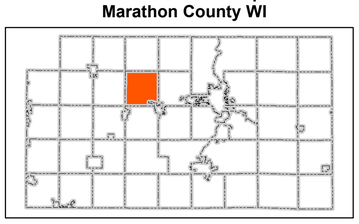


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
- Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
- Municipal Boundary
- Incorporated Areas
- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Rietbrock

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

V. OF ATHENS

PIONEER RD
BARN SWALLOW RD
HART RD
MERIDIAN RD
DREWEK CREEK RD
RUFFED GROUSE RD
COUNTY ROAD H
COUNTY ROAD M
COUNTY ROAD U
LOVERS LN
GESICKI RD
CHERRY GROVE LN
FIR GROVE RD
JAKUBOWSKI RD
RED ROBIN RD
SCHNAPPSVILLE RD
SNOWY OWL RD
RED CARDINAL RD
WUERTZBURG RD
URMANSKI RD
ASPEN VALLEY RD
STATE HIGHWAY 29

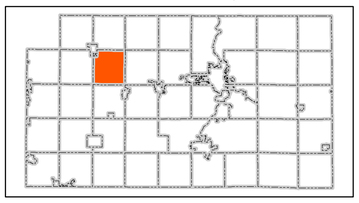
V. OF EDGAR

- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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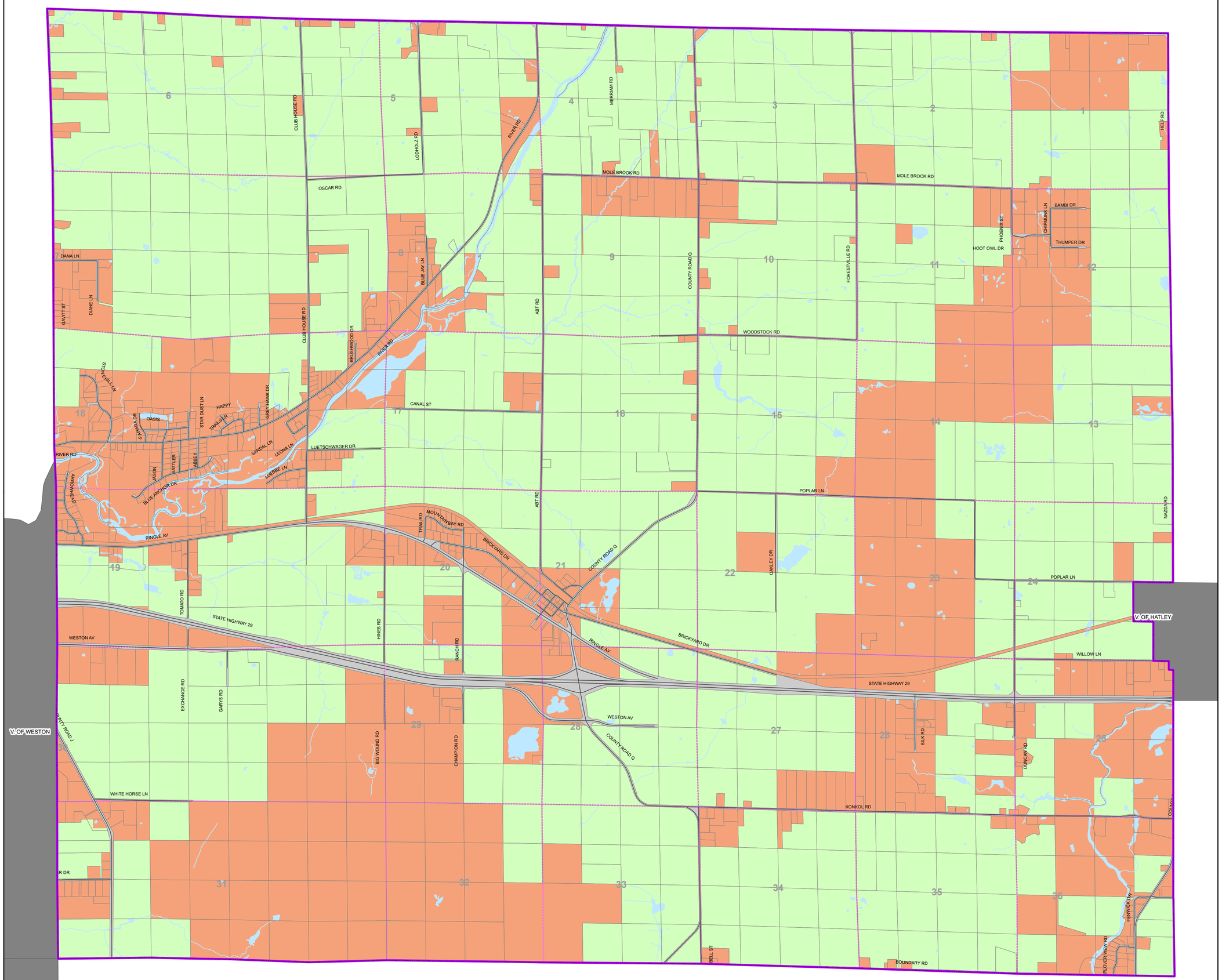
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Ringle

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

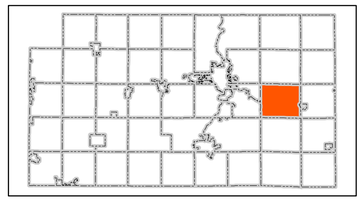


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- Parcels
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- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

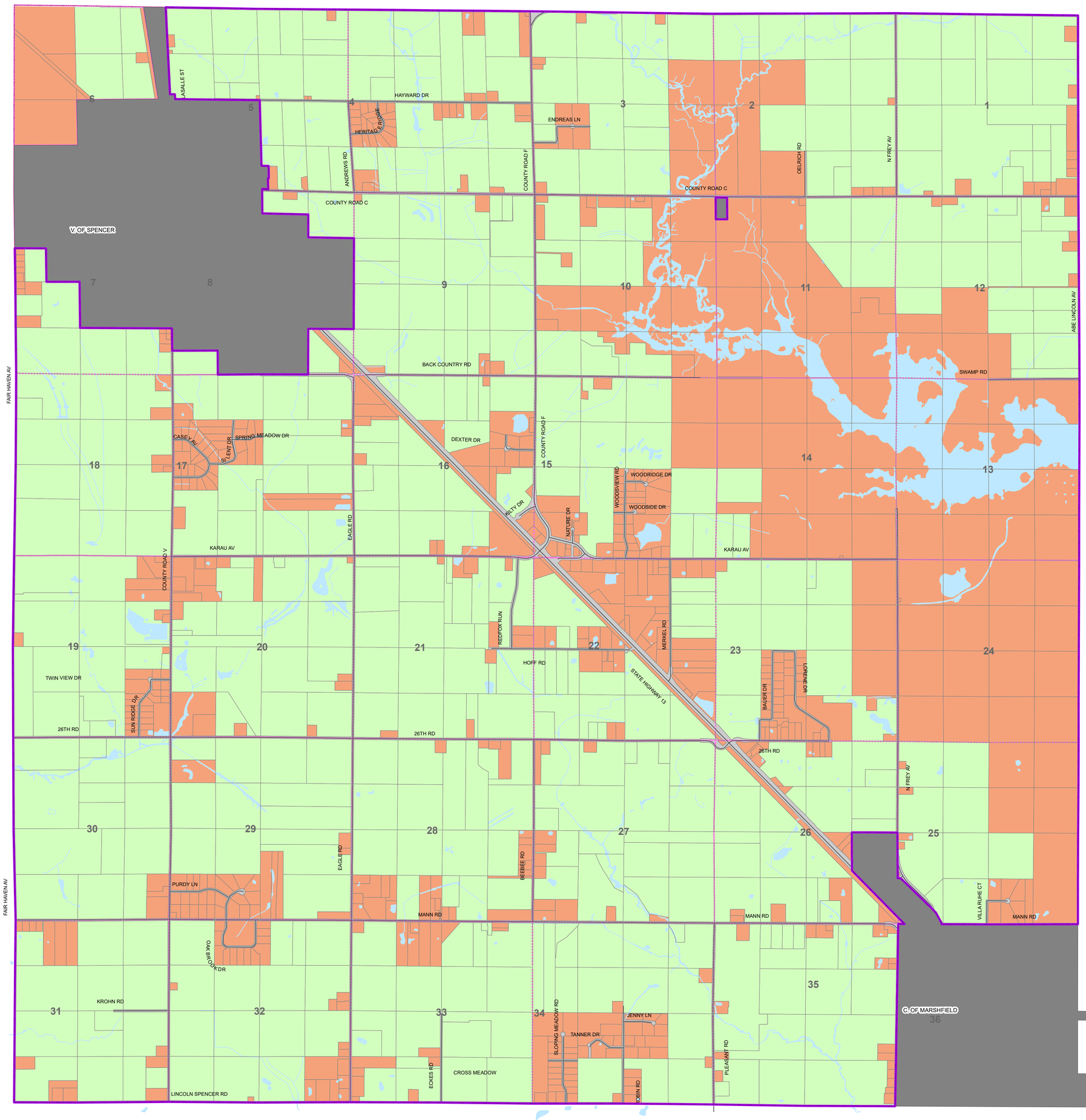
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Marathon County

Town of Spencer

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

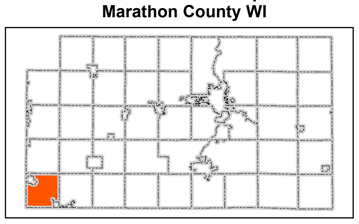


2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
Non-Farmland Preservation Areas
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Areas
Parcels
Sections (est.)
Roads
Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

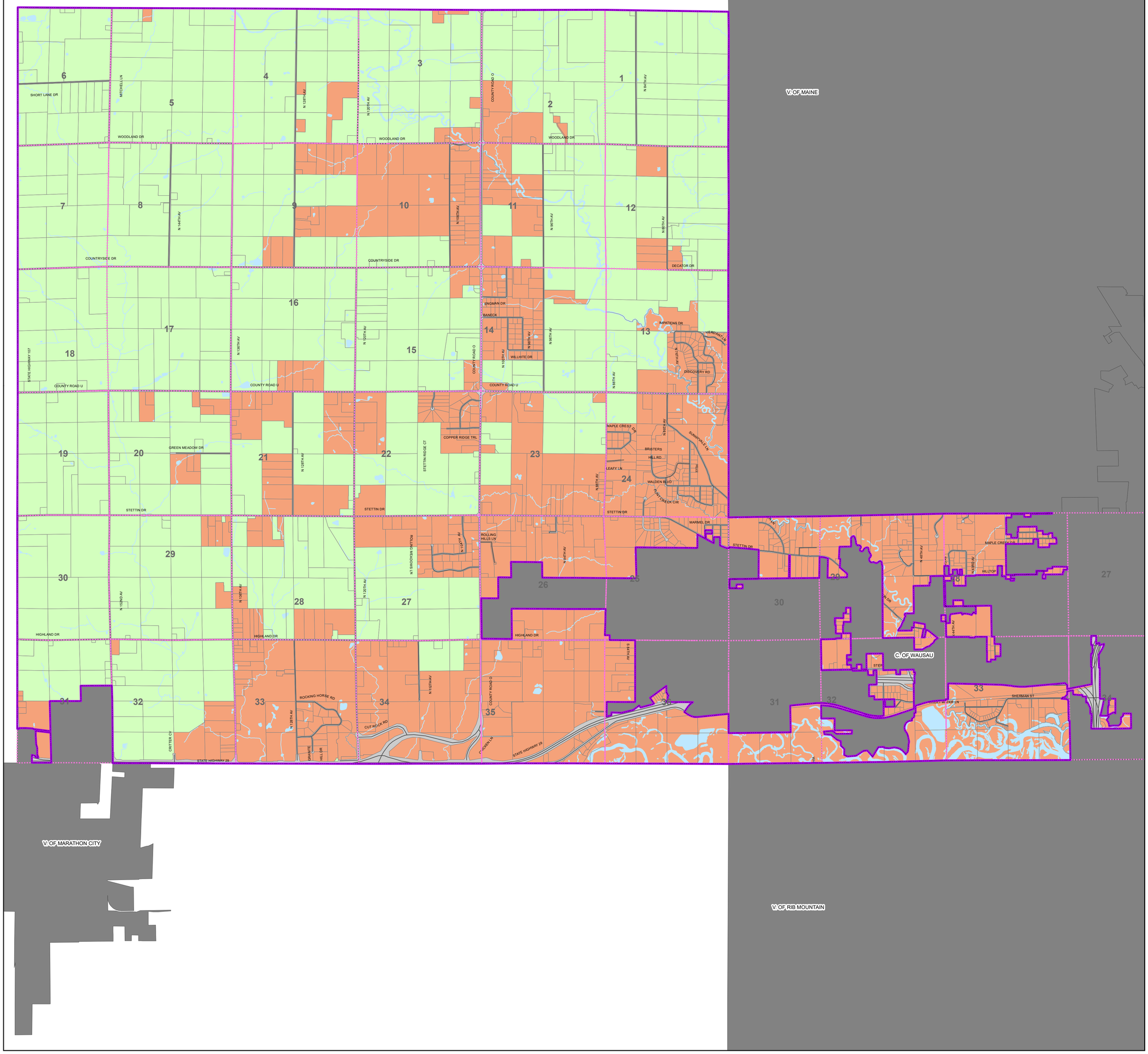
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Marathon County

Town of Stettin

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

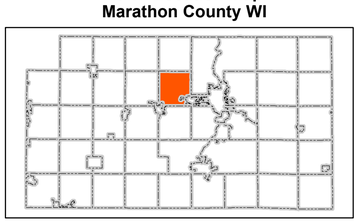


- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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- Parcels
- Sections (est.)
- Roads
- Water Features

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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

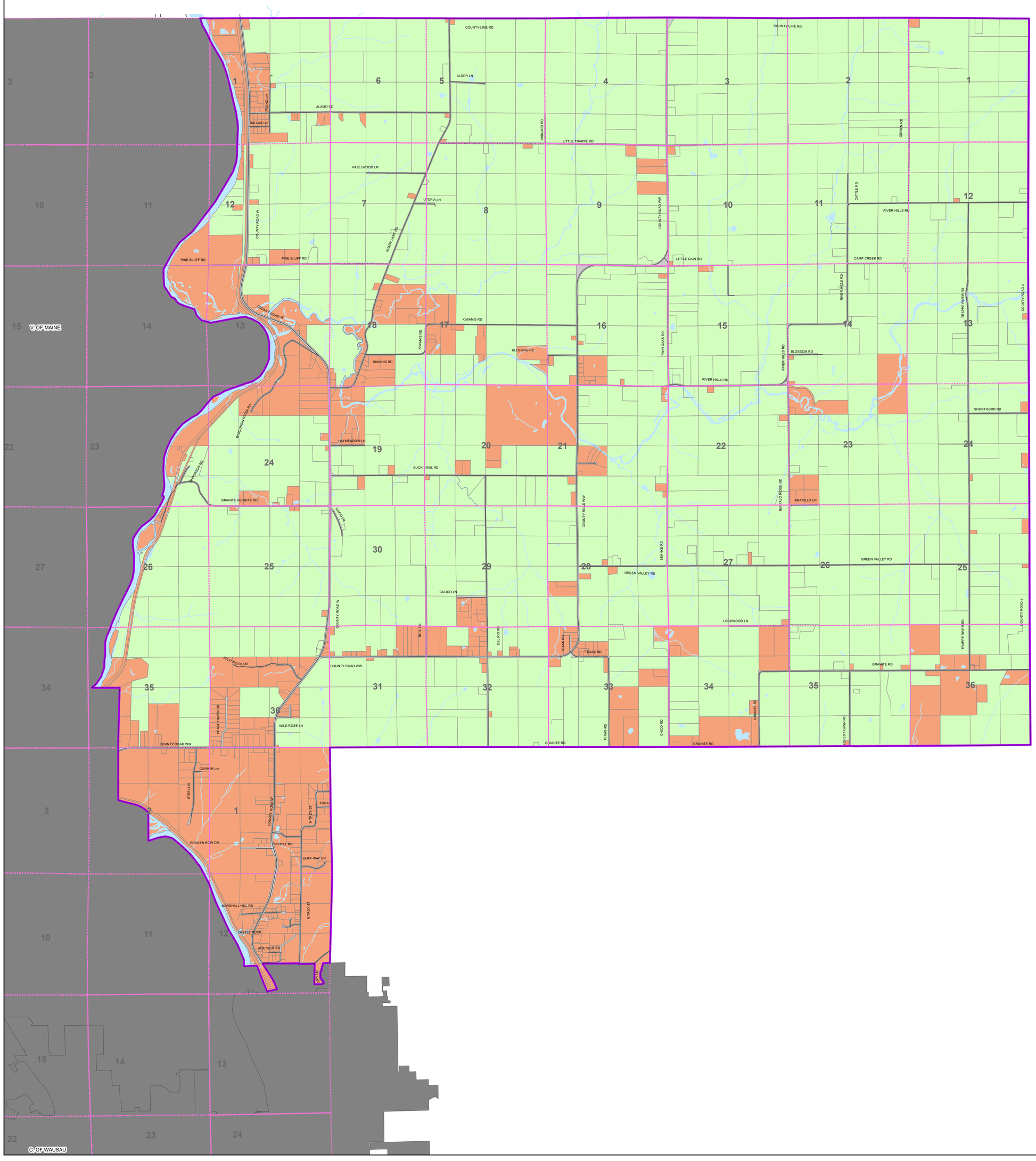
Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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Marathon County

Town of Texas

Farmland Preservation Plan Map



- 2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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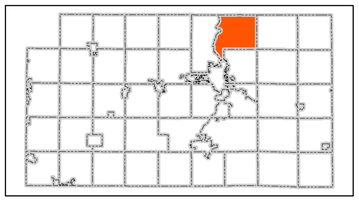
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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

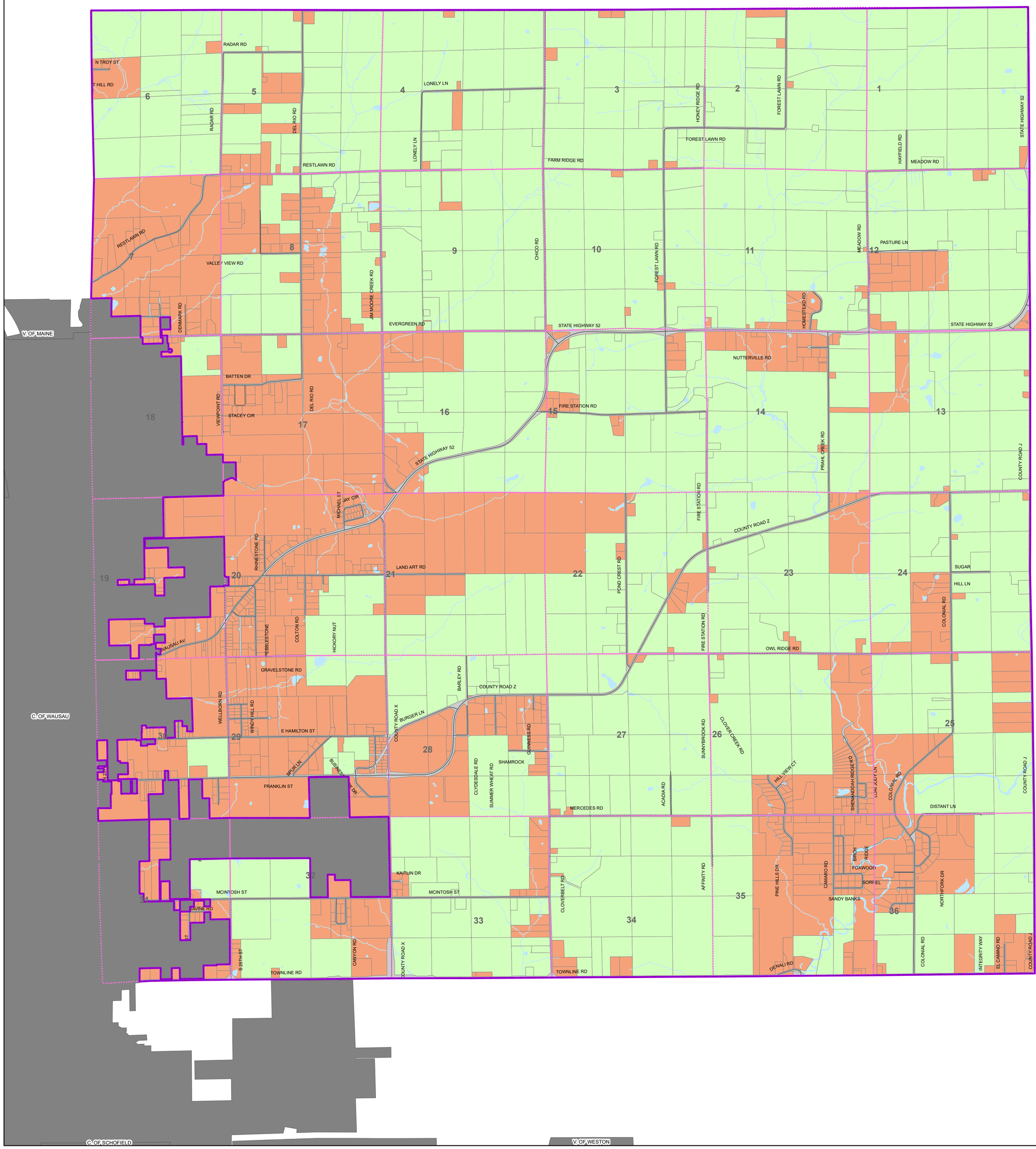
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Marathon County

Town of Wausau

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

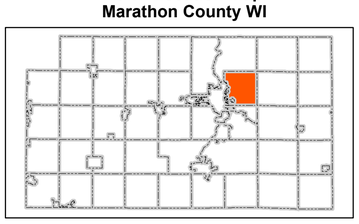


2024 Farmland Preservation Areas
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Roads
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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



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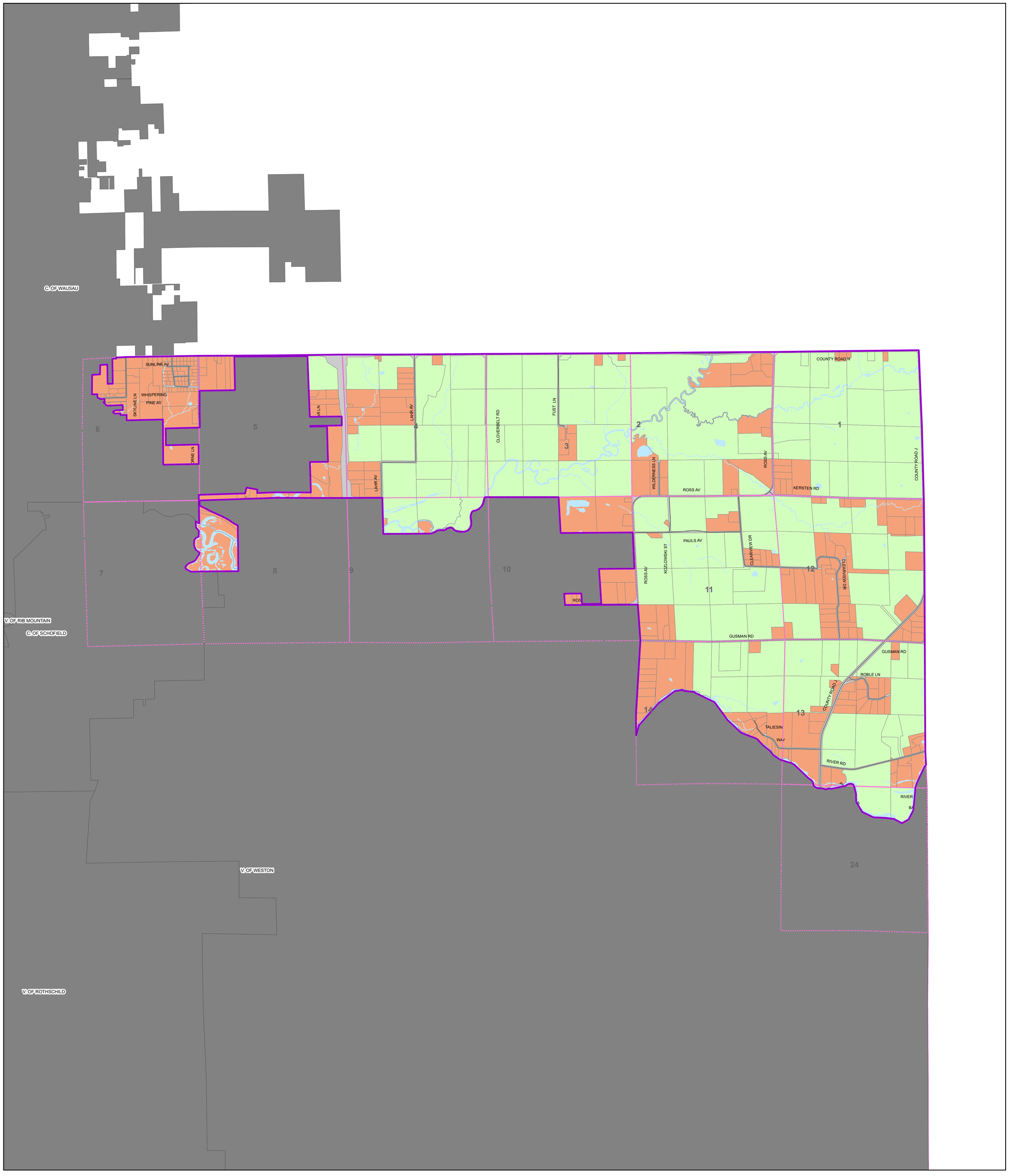
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Marathon County

Town of Weston

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

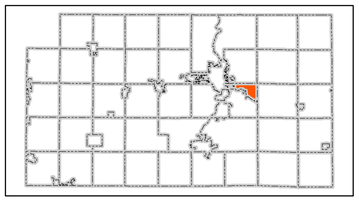


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

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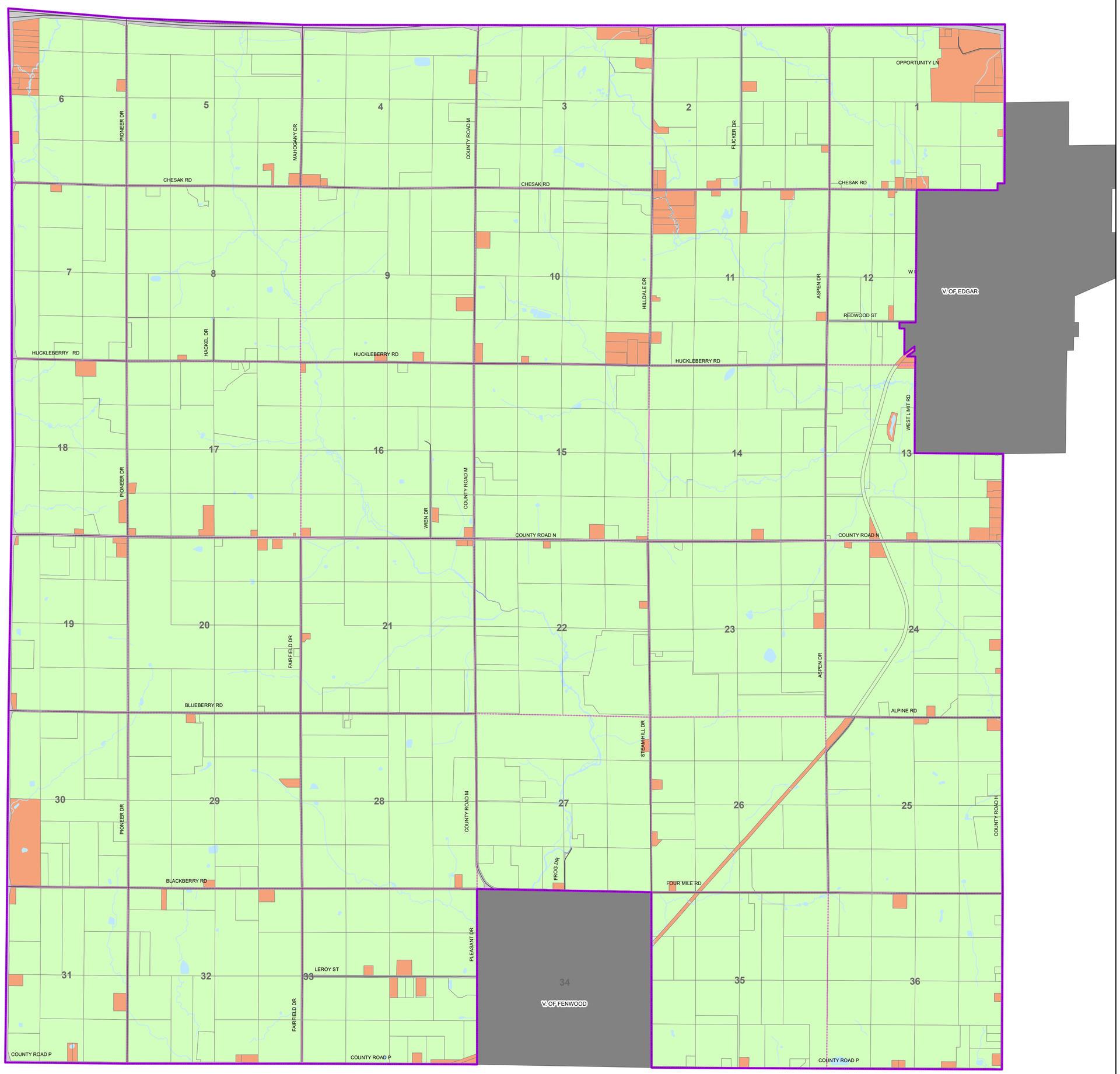
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Marathon County

Town of Wien

Farmland Preservation Plan Map

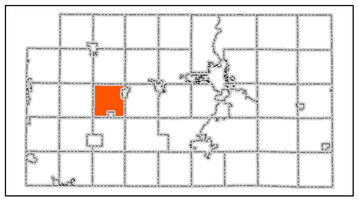


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Town Location Map
Marathon County WI



MARATHON COUNTY

Map Print Date: 5/6/2024

Map Developed by Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning GIS

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APPENDIX E: PLAN APPROVAL BY WI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Secretary Randy Romanski

June 10, 2024

Kirk Langfoss, Conservation Analyst
Marathon County Conservation
210 River Driver
Wausau, WI 54403

Re: **Certification of the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan**

Dear Kirk:

Attached is a department order certifying Marathon County's Farmland Preservation Plan under s. 91.16, Wis. Stats. The plan text and maps must be adopted by the County Board before December 31, 2024. Please forward the resolution adopting the plan materials to DATCPWorkinglands@wisconsin.gov to complete the certification process.

We look forward to working with you in the future on farmland preservation in Marathon County. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

WJ. Coye

Wednesday Coye
Farmland Preservation Program
608-224-4611

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

MARATHON COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN	ARM Division Docket No. 073-00000-P-24 F-0524 ORDER CERTIFYING MARATHON COUNTY'S FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2034

INTRODUCTION

Marathon County has asked the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection ("DATCP") to certify a comprehensively revised farmland preservation plan pursuant to s. 91.16, Wis. Stats. DATCP has considered the request and adopts the following decision:

FINDINGS OF FACT

(1) DATCP is an agency of the State of Wisconsin, and is responsible for administering Wisconsin's farmland preservation law under ch. 91, Wis. Stats., as repealed and recreated by 2009 Wis. Act 28.

(2) Marathon County is a county of the State of Wisconsin.

(3) In order for a county and its residents to participate in the farmland preservation program, a county must have a state-certified farmland preservation plan. Among other things, the certified plan must clearly designate farmland preservation areas that the county plans to preserve for agricultural use.

(4) Marathon County currently has a state-certified farmland preservation plan that expires on December 31, 2024.

(5) Under s. 91.16(8), Wis. Stats., the certification of a farmland preservation plan does not cover any subsequent plan revision (adopted after July 1, 2009) unless DATCP certifies that plan revision.

(6) On May 7, 2024, DATCP received from Marathon County a request to certify a comprehensively revised county farmland preservation plan under s. 91.16, Wis. Stats. The county submitted the application in the form required under s. 91.20, Wis. Stats. The application included the certifications required under s. 91.20(3), Wis. Stats.

(7) On May 9, 2024, DATCP confirmed by letter that the Marathon County farmland preservation plan certification application was complete, and that DATCP would proceed to review the complete application.

(8) Under s. 91.16(3)(a), Wis. Stats., DATCP may certify a county plan based on the county's certification under s. 91.20(3), Wis. Stats., that the plan meets applicable certification standards under s. 91.18, Wis. Stats.

(9) DATCP may certify a farmland preservation plan if the plan meets applicable statutory standards under s. 91.18, Wis. Stats. DATCP may certify based on the representations contained in the county's application, but may conduct its own review and verification as it deems appropriate.

(10) Under s. 91.10(2), Wis. Stats., the farmland preservation plan must be consistent with the Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, and the County must include the farmland preservation plan in the County Comprehensive Plan.

(11) Under s. 91.16(2)(a), Wis. Stats., DATCP may certify a county farmland preservation plan for a specified period of up to 10 years. Under s. 91.16(6), Wis. Stats., DATCP may make its certification contingent upon the county adoption of the certified plan text and maps, in the form certified.

(12) Under s. 91.16(9), Wis. Stats., DATCP may withdraw its certification at any time if DATCP finds that the certified plan materially fails to meet applicable certification standards under s. 91.18, Wis. Stats.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

(1) Based on Marathon County's certification that the attached county farmland preservation plan meets applicable certification requirements under s. 91.18, Wis. Stats., DATCP may certify that plan for up to 10 years.

(2) DATCP may make its certification contingent upon the county adoption of the certified plan text and maps, in the form certified, and contingent upon its adoption as part of the County comprehensive plan.

(3) Certification does not apply to plan amendments made after the certification date, unless DATCP certifies those amendments.

(4) DATCP may withdraw its certification at any time if DATCP finds that the certified plan text and maps materially fail to meet applicable certification standards under s. 91.18, Wis. Stats.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

(1) The attached Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan text (dated March 30, 2024) and maps (dated March 6, 2024) are hereby certified under s. 91.16, Wis. Stats.

(2) The certified farmland preservation plan area for Marathon County is titled "2024 Farmland Preservation Plan Area".

(3) This order takes effect on the date on which it is signed.

(4) This certification expires at the end of the day on December 31, 2034.

Dated this 6th day of June, 2024.

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

By _____
Brian D. Kuhn, Acting Administrator
Division of Agricultural Resource Management

Parties for Purposes of Review Under s. 227.53, Wis. Stats.: **Marathon County**

Copies to:

Kirk Langfoss, Conservation Analyst
Marathon County Conservation
210 River Driver
Wausau, WI
kirk.langfoss@co.marathon.wi.us

APPENDIX F: PLAN APPROVAL BY MARATHON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ORDINANCE #O -22-24
Farmland Preservation Plan Update

WHEREAS, the Marathon County Board of Supervisors has been petitioned by Laurie Miskimins, Conservation, Planning, and Zoning (CPZ) Director, to adopt the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan 2024-2033. The draft may be viewed online at: https://www.marathoncounty.gov/services/conservation/farmland-preservation or at the Marathon County Conservation Planning and Zoning Office, 210 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403. Copies may be obtained by contacting the CPZ Department at 210 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403, or by calling (715) 261-6000; and

WHEREAS, the petition was referred to the Marathon County Environmental Resources Committee (the Committee) for public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Committee, on due notice, conducted a public hearing thereon, pursuant to Section 59.69, Wisconsin Statutes on June 4, 2024 to consider the petition to adopt the updated Farmland Presurvation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Committee, being duly informed of the facts pertinent to the changes proposed, having reviewed the staff report, and duly advised the recommendations, recommended that the petition be GRANTED AS APPLIED FOR.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the County Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon does ordain as follows: The Marathon County Farm Preservation Plan is updated and adopted as stated above.

Environmental Resources Committee

Ayes 26 Nays 7 Abstain _____ Absent 5 [ ]Voice Vote

☒ Approved and adopted this 18th day of June, 2024

☐ Denied this _____ day of _____, 2024

Approved as to Form:

Michael Puerner, Corporation Counsel

MARATHON COUNTY

Attest:

Kim Trueblood, Marathon County Clerk

Kurt Gibbs, County Board Chair

Kristi Palmer, Finance Director
Approved as to Financial Impact (if necessary)