

III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Scandia's original vegetation was the result of glacial processes that created the topographic landscape features and soil types. As the landscape was modified during settlement and development, most areas with soils suitable for crop production were cleared for planting. Natural areas on steep slopes, hydric soils, and poor soils were left alone or used as pasture. This has led to Scandia's current landscape - a mosaic of agricultural lands, residential and commercial development, and areas of natural vegetated cover.

As development continues, plans to manage future growth should be based on a thorough understanding of the natural resources within the city's boundaries. The purpose of this section is to summarize available information regarding natural resources in the City of Scandia and to discuss the relationship between natural resources and land use planning. Water resources, such as lakes, rivers, and streams, are discussed in detail in the Water Resources Chapter.

A. Natural Resources Goals and Objectives

Goal: Protect natural resources and look for opportunities to connect large areas of open space.

Objectives:

- Coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Washington County on plans for the long-term acquisition and development of William O'Brien State Park and Big Marine Park Reserve.
- Prioritize the preservation and treatment of open space in planning and review of all types of development within the City.

Goal: Preserve high quality natural areas

Objectives:

- Work with property owners seeking to utilize Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights, as appropriate, to obtain and protect high quality natural areas while compensating landowners who give up development rights to meet community land use and natural resource goals.

Goal: Eliminate, reduce or mitigate the negative effects of invasive species on natural areas

Objectives:

- Provide educational resources and materials to residents and businesses regarding invasive species.

Goal: Recognize and enhance publicly owned lands and improve public access to such lands where appropriate.

Objectives:

- Promote preservation and restoration of publicly owned and other lands permanently protected from development through education and cooperation with other governmental agencies and community groups.
- Improve designated physical access to the St. Croix River corridor and other important or high quality natural areas where public lands may provide access opportunities while preserving natural and historical integrity.
- Encourage for the preservation and establishment of scenic views throughout the City.

Goal: Work with property owners to protect and preserve native, endangered, threatened and unique plants and animals on privately owned land.

Objectives:

- Provide educational resources and materials to residents and businesses regarding invasive species.
- Encourage connections to high quality natural areas through natural corridors on private land in order to allow for wildlife movement among habitats as part of development.

B. Aggregate Resources

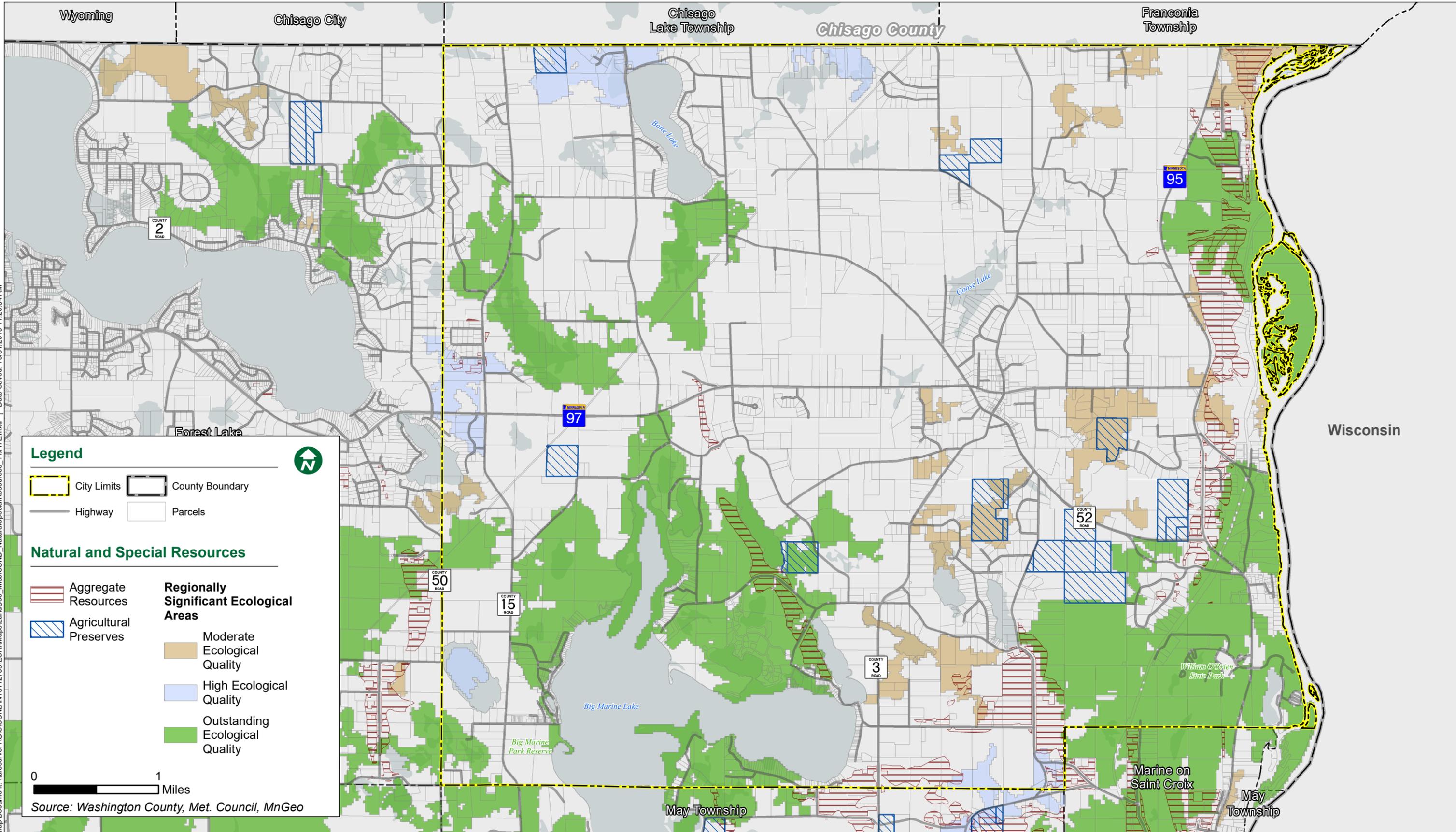
In 2000, the Metropolitan Council, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Geological Survey collaborated on an aggregate resource inventory of the seven-county metropolitan area. The inventory identified and categorized likely areas of dolostone deposits, and sand and gravel deposits. Areas identified as “dolostone” represent significant potential deposits of Prairie du Chien dolostone suitable for crushed aggregate with less than 10 feet of overburden. The sand and gravel deposits are classified into three categories according to type and quality (based on percent of gravel content), thickness of deposit, amount of overlying material, relationship to water table, and reliability of the mapping. Table III-A summarizes the estimated areas of the dolostone deposits and the categories of sand and gravel deposits found in the City of Scandia. Aggregate resource deposits are shown on Figure III-A – Natural and Special Resources.

Table III-A – Acreage of Known Deposits	
Deposit Type	Size (in acres)
Dolostone	62
Sand & Gravel Deposit, good to excellent quality	649
Sand & Gravel Deposit, moderate to good quality	254

C. Regionally Significant Natural Areas

The MN DNR completed an analysis of regionally significant Terrestrial and Wetland Ecological Areas in the seven-county metropolitan area in 2004. The analysis assessed remaining forest, grassland, and wetland areas. The scores were determined by examining important ecological attributes of the natural areas, including size, shape, cover type diversity, and adjacent land use. This analysis was included in the previous comprehensive plan and is maintained here to inform and guide the city’s land use, as protecting natural resources is one of the city’s four overarching goals for the future. These areas are shown in Figure III-A.

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Legend

City Limits
 County Boundary
 Highway
 Parcels

Natural and Special Resources

Aggregate Resources
 Agricultural Preserves

Regionally Significant Ecological Areas

Moderate Ecological Quality
 High Ecological Quality
 Outstanding Ecological Quality

0 1 Miles

Source: Washington County, Met. Council, MnGeo

D. Special Resource Protection

1. Agriculture Preserve

The Agriculture Preserves District (AP) plans for the continuation of the Agricultural Preserves Program in Scandia. This land use district is intended to encourage the continuation of agriculture through ensuring the availability of the program to qualifying agricultural landowners. While Scandia plans for long-term agriculture through the use of the Agricultural Preserve Program, it is the choice of a landowner to enroll in the Agricultural Preserves Program. The Agricultural Preserves Program has set requirements, including maximum housing densities, that determine the eligibility of parcels to enroll in the program. Parcels zoned as Agricultural Core in the Future Land Use (see **Figure II-F - Future Land Use**) meet the density requirements to qualify to enroll in the Agricultural Preserve Program. Participating parcels as of 2014 are shown in **Figure II-G**.

2. Historic Protections

a) *National Register of Historic Places*

John Copas House: The John Copas House was built in 1880 on the site of an 1857 homestead. It was the home of John Copas, an early settler, merchant, and farmer. John was also a founding member of the Copas community. The home is currently used as a single family dwelling. It is located in the southeast corner of Scandia on Highway 95.

Johannes Erickson House: The Johannes Erickson House is a log dwelling with a gambrel style roof. The house was built in 1868 by Swedish immigrant Erickson. The house is part of the Gammelgarden Museum.

Hay Lake School: The Hay Lake School is a brick school with bell tower. The school was built in 1895 by Scandia residents and was Scandia's first school. Hay Lake School served as the community's school until services were moved to Elim Church. The building is currently run by the Washington County Historical Society as a museum and is located on County Road 3 and Old Maine Trail.

b) *Historic Settlements*

Scandia Village Center: The Village Center is literally and figuratively the heart of the community. The street pattern is characterized by triangles formed by converging major roads at a high point between valleys, interconnected by a grid of local streets. Local landmarks include historic commercial buildings, Elim Lutheran Church and cemetery, and the Gammelgarden Museum. Cultural and civic activities focus on the same buildings as well as the Community Center and park. The Village Center is architecturally diverse with a variety of early 20th-century commercial building types, the 1850's Swedish Farmhouse style museum and its outbuildings, and the Gothic Revival style of the church, built in 1931. The formal gardens of the Elim Cemetery offer an attractive site for community events.

Copas: Once a free-standing village centered on a Soo Line railroad depot (the railroad between the Twin Cities and Duluth located west of Highway 95), Copas is now a largely residential hamlet with a few historic and commercial buildings fronting State Highway 95. The majority of the remaining buildings are located on a number of tree-lined residential streets that parallel the St. Croix River.

Former Hamlets and Historical Localities: Otisville, Big Lake, and Panola (a post office located just north of the city boundary) were all rural settlements of the region, but few traces of these communities remain. The Log House Landing site near the

former hamlet of Otisville remains as a public water access. The Big Lake School and Goose Lake School sites also remain, harkening to Scandia's and the region's history.