

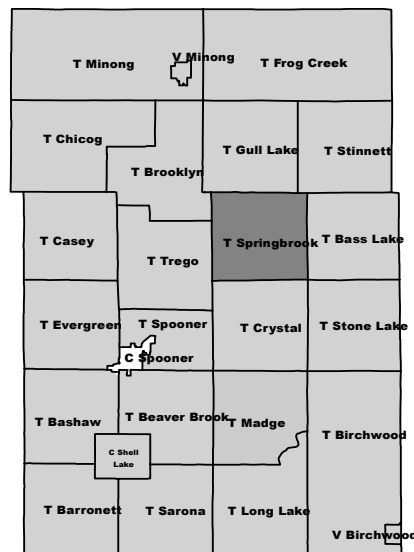
INTRODUCTION

The Town of Springbrook is located in central Washburn County, and borders the Towns of Trego and Brooklyn to the west, the Towns of Gull Lake and Stinnett to the north, the Town of Bass Lake (Washburn County) to the east, and the Town of Crystal to the south. Historically, Springbrook was part of Veazie from 1883 through 1904, then became Springbrook. It is located at latitude 455626N & longitude 0914325W. The villages of Ames, Earl and Springbrook are located in Springbrook Township. The post office and the township were both called Namekagon until 1901 when the post office was changed to Springbrook. The name was apparently inspired by the small creek which is spring-fed.

Springbrook is a rural community that has experienced population growth over the past decade (133 persons). Of the businesses operating in the town, home businesses, eating establishments, farming, forestry and recreation-oriented businesses are the primary economic sectors. Residents enjoy the rural character and atmosphere of the town, which is sustained by a large amount of woodlands and water to create an extremely diversified ecosystem. The plentiful woodlands and abundant water resources provide the basis for a diverse set of wildlife and other natural resources. The major water resource, the Namekagon River, along with the rich amount of forestland, have provided residents and visitors alike with a unique and enjoyable environment in a rural character setting. Rural character is defined as life in the country characterized by open spaces, wooded areas, low population density, excellent water quality, clean lakes, abundant wildlife, dark night skies, and a high quality natural habitat.

Development of the comprehensive plan is intended to guide future land use decisions made by the Town of Springbrook, surrounding jurisdictions, and Washburn County. It is important to point out this plan is representative of year-round and seasonal residents. Participation by year-round and seasonal residents has contributed to a broad-based plan where all persons had an opportunity to provide direct input. Nowhere during the process were seasonal residents ignored as being “non-voting” landowners or non-residents of the community. Throughout the process, the planning committee/commission encouraged and utilized comments from the public. As a result of this integrated planning process, the comprehensive plan examines the entire community, that pertaining to both year-round and seasonal residents.

Figure 1: Washburn County



PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The *Town of Springbrook Comprehensive Plan* is intended to assist local officials make future land use decisions. The plan will also assist in development and management issues by addressing short-range and long-range concerns regarding growth, development, and preservation of the community. There are numerous reasons for developing a comprehensive plan, including;

- Identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- Recommending types of land use for specific areas of the town;
- Preserving forestry practices and retaining forestry as a viable industry;
- Protecting surface water resources and their surrounding environments;
- Identifying needed transportation and community facilities to serve future residents;
- Directing housing and other investments in the town; and
- Providing detailed objectives and actions to implement the plan goals.

This comprehensive plan has been prepared under the Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning legislation contained in Wisconsin Statute 66.1001. The plan is organized into nine chapters or elements. These include: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Land Use, and Implementation.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Efforts by the Town of Springbrook to begin reviewing and discussing comprehensive planning began in 2001 when a community planning committee representing town residents was appointed by the town board. This broad-based committee utilized a Washburn County landowner survey which was used in developing the comprehensive plan to date.

The Planning Committee/Commission has prepared goals, objectives, and action statements to aid the Town of Springbrook in planning for its future. The Town Board, following review and recommendations by the plan commission adopted the goals and objectives. These broad goals and objectives are intended to provide guidelines for future decision about land use and are intended to provide an orderly basis for immediate and long-range planning. These guidelines will be used by the plan commission in its recommendations to the town board on future land use changes. The goals and objectives recommended in this comprehensive plan are the framework for the various specific action-plans and programs taken on by both the public and private sectors. These implementation statements will provide the foundation for town and county future ordinances, especially those relating to zoning, land division, erosion control, parks, and town and county services.

To guide the planning process, the Town of Springbrook Comprehensive Planning Committee/Commission directed a number of efforts to ensure that this comprehensive plan is based on a vision shared by Springbrook residents. The results are summarized below.

TOWN OF SPRINGBROOK “PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN”

Wisconsin’s new “Smart Growth” law requires municipalities to adopt written procedures that are designed to foster a wide range of public participation throughout the planning process. The main goal of this plan is to make all citizens of Springbrook aware of the progress of the comprehensive planning process occurring in the town and to offer the public opportunities to make suggestions or comments during the process. See Appendix B for a copy of the plan.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In January 2002, a community land use survey was mailed to 369 property owners and residents of the Town of Springbrook. Of the 369 sent, 117 completed surveys were returned to Northwest Regional Planning Commission. This results in a response rate of 31.7 percent, excellent for a written survey of six pages. The survey included questions to gather basic demographic data, ascertain resident’s assessment of the current situation in the town, and to obtain opinions regarding the town’s future. (Appendix A)

ISSUES IDENTIFICATION AND S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS

The town held its issues identification meeting in January 2003, and a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) meeting in March 2003. The purpose of the issues meeting was to identify issues the town faces specific to seven of the nine ‘Smart Growth’ elements. In March, the town held a workshop where participants were asked to express their opinions about the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Results of both the issues and S.W.O.T. meetings are available at the end of the Issues and Opportunities Element.

TOWN OF SPRINGBROOK OPEN HOUSE

On November 18, 2003, 7-9 p.m., the Town of Springbrook held an open house/public input session at the town hall. The purpose of the open house was to discuss the results of the survey and to gather comments from the public on the planning process. Twenty-four people attended this meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

A formal public hearing on the comprehensive plan and adopting ordinance was held on November 8, 2005. In advance of that hearing, the town provided copies of the plan to surrounding governments and other parties under the requirements of the ‘Smart Growth’ legislation.