Living with Wildlife

- Living in a rural area requires careful consideration and planning to deal with the potential effects of wildlife.
- Deer, although beautiful, can ravage a garden or expensive plants. Carefully consider which plants you will use in your landscaping or garden.
- Mosquitoes, deer flies and other biting insects are common and no control programs exist in rural areas.
- Raccoons are attracted to garbage and bird feeders as a food supply. Secure these items, especially at night, to prevent problems.
- To attract wildlife and improve habitat contact Wisconsin DNR at 920-662-5100.
- To report a deer carcass, contact the County Sheriff’s Department. For all other animal carcasses, contact the County Highway Department when it’s on a county or state highway or the town if it’s on a town road.

Introduction

The rural areas of Calumet County continue to experience growth as many people choose to live in a country setting while being close to urban amenities. The County welcomes new rural residents. Living in a rural area, however, differs in many ways from an urban community. This Rural Living Guide has been developed to inform those who are considering purchasing a rural property and those that already have, and to raise their awareness about issues that may affect them when living in a rural area. Phone numbers for the County Departments mentioned in this guide are listed on Page 4.

Additional Resources

- For more information on Rural Living, contact the Calumet County UW-Extension Office, or see the following University of Wisconsin-Extension Publications at www.learningstore.uwex.edu (search by title or number).
- Care & Maintenance of Residential Septic Systems (B3583)
- Outdoor Hazards in Wisconsin: A Guide to Noxious Insects, Plants, and Wildlife (G3564)
- Plants Not Favoried by Deer (A3727)
- Prairie Primer (G3736)
- Wildlife Management (G3097)

This information is by no means all inclusive. There may be issues that you may encounter that we have overlooked. Look for the unexpected and surprises when purchasing rural property.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

- Hunting, fishing and trapping are rural traditions. There is a season for many species, some of which are open all year. Most hunting, however, is done in the fall. Wisconsin has hunter harassment laws that make it a crime to interfere with legal hunting. Respect those who partake in these activities or join a local sportsman club to learn how to participate yourself.
- Trespass
  - You are criminally trespassing on private land unless you get permission from the owner. Land does not have to be posted with signs unless it is adjacent to public land (this includes private forest lands open to public hunting/use). Respect private property and ask before you use.

Farm Operation

- Agriculture is an important part of the county’s economy.
- Farm operations have both legal rights and regulations.
- Farmers often work around the clock, and farm operations commonly include dust, noise, odors, and farm chemicals. These typical activities may affect adjoining property owners.
- Farm vehicles are allowed on all roads and may back up traffic. Please watch for, and be patient with, slow moving vehicles.
- When fields or landscapes are changed, it can change the flow of water across neighboring properties. Generally, this is allowed for farms, but contact the town chairperson or clerk to determine any restrictions on altering water flow.

Manure

- While manure does not smell like ‘roses’ to some people, it is an important and valuable by-product of livestock. Manure improves soil quality by providing essential plant nutrients thus increasing crop yields. It also lessens the need for costly, high energy demanding commercial nitrogen fertilizers.
- There are a few situations when manure needs to be incorporated into the soil within 3 days, but in most cases, plans are used to grow crops efficiently and reduce any environmental damage potentially caused by the nutrients.
- During certain times of the year, roads may be covered with mud or manure. When this happens, it is the farm operator’s responsibility to clean up. Talk to the farmer or contact the County Sheriff’s Department with concerns.
- The County Land & Water Conservation Department may be able to help answer other manure questions.

Fences

- State law (Chapter 90 of State Statutes) states that if livestock is present on one property, a fence must be maintained on the property line by BOTH property owners. Other accommodations can be made if both parties agree. More information on this topic is listed on page 4.

Emergency Services

911
- In case of emergency, dial 911. Calumet County has Enhanced 911 (E911), which displays the caller’s location to the dispatch operator. Calls from cell phones provide less specific info than from landlines.
- Responses to calls for ambulance service are provided through ambulance service areas and community based first responders, backed-up from other available ambulance transportation organizations (Calumet Medical Center, Gold...
Wells and Drinking Water

- Drinking water for rural houses comes from private wells. State regulations only require that the water be tested for bacteria at the time of construction. Thereafter it is the responsibility of landowners to test their water.
- Owners are NOT required to replace wells if testing shows poor water quality.
- Water testing kits are available for a fee at the County Land and Water Conservation Department.
- The most common well contaminants in Calumet County are nitrates and bacteria, which come from animal waste, soil fertilizer, or failing septic systems. For more information, contact the County Land and Water Conservation Department.
- Unused wells must be abandoned because they pose a threat to groundwater. For proper abandonment procedures, contact the County Planning Department.

Utilities

- Propane, also known as LP, is the most common fuel used in rural settings. Propane tanks are set by the LP supplier and are filled on an “as needed” basis or on a “keep filled” basis.
- Natural gas is provided within village and city limits, with a few exceptions in rural areas. Contact WPS (1-800-450-7260) or WE Energies (1-800-242-9137) for serviceability.
- Electric service is provided by WPS (1-800-450-7260), WE Energies (1-800-242-9137), or New Holstein Utilities (920-898-5776).
- Some rural residents may find it difficult to obtain internet service, especially high-speed. Some goes for cable TV.

Roads and Driveway Access

- Most rural roads are under public ownership. Maintenance of public roads is the responsibility of the Town, County or State. It is the responsibility of the owners along a private road/joint driveway to maintain and plow snow.
- A driveway permit is required for access to public roads and highways. Standards for driveway locations vary depending on jurisdiction. For a driveway permit on town roads contact the town; for county roads, contact the County Highway Department; for state highways contact WisDOT at 920-492-7734.

Mailboxes

- Mailboxes are to be on a level surface. The mailbox should be at least 46” high from the road to the bottom of the box and set back far enough not to be hit by a snowplow (approximately 6-8”). Contact your local postmaster to determine on which side of the road your mailbox should be placed.

Private Property Restrictions

- There may be private arrangements in addition to government regulations that can affect what you may do with your property.
- Easements may require you to allow construction and maintenance of roads, utilities, stormwater management facilities, etc. across your land.
- Many rural housing developments have associations with deed restrictions and covenants that restrict outbuildings, outdoor storage, and building design.
- Restrictions may be recorded with the property deed or the plat and should be checked carefully. For specifics, contact the County Register of Deeds.

Diggers Hotline

- Whether you want to plant a tree or dig a trench, contact the Diggers Hotline at 1-800-242-8511 in advance to arrange to have the location of any buried lines marked.

Government Services

Town Government

- Places that aren’t an incorporated village or city in Wisconsin are governed by a “town” form of government. This includes hamlets and other unincorporated places in Calumet County such as Darboy, Forest Junction, or Charlies.
- Town boards have three to five members elected in the spring of odd numbered years. Many town officials are nominated for office through a caucus process. Towns have an elected or appointed clerk and treasurer.
- Services offered by town government vary. Towns are rural in nature and do not provide a full range of services. Town government is typically responsible for road maintenance and snow removal. Some more populated towns have additional services.
- Town government in Wisconsin has an element of direct participatory democracy through the Annual Meeting each April at which residents vote on policy and budget issues.

County Government

- County government serves two purposes. It provides certain services at the local level for the state, and it is also a unit of local self-government.
- The Calumet County website www.co.calumet.wi.us is filled with information regarding the services county government provides to rural residents including: human services, law enforcement (sheriff), state circuit court system, highway department, tax administration and collection, planning and zoning, conservation, and other government related functions.

Snowplowing

- Snow plowing takes longer to complete in a rural area. Your road may not be plowed before you have to leave in the morning.
- If you live on a private road or joint driveway, snow plowing is your responsibility. Talk to your neighbor before it snows.

Garbage and Recycling

- Garbage collection and recycling program details vary by location. For a collection schedule, contact your town.

Fire Danger

Outdoor Debris Burning

- Wild Fires happen most often during the months of April and May. A primary cause of these fires is debris burning.
- Permits are needed in some towns for outdoor debris burning whenever the ground is not snow covered. Burning permits may be obtained from the town if applicable. No permit is needed when the sole purpose is for cooking and warming.

Burn Barrels

- Once common practice, the DNR strongly discourages the use of burn barrels because the fumes created by burning modern wastes can be toxic and cause serious health problems. The only items that may be burned are leaves, plant clippings, paper, cardboard, and clean untreated wood.
- Burning materials such as tires, plastic, and rubber is prohibited because they generate toxic air emissions and hazardous ash residue. For more information see: http://dnr.wi.gov/environmentprotection/ob/

Outdoor Wood-Fired Boilers

- Outdoor wood-fired boilers (OWBs) are growing as an alternative heating source, especially in rural areas, leading to a corresponding increase in the number of smoke exposure complaints. Be aware that there may or may not be local regulations in your town governing these heating units. Contact your town for information.

Animals & Wildlife

Pets and Stray Animals

- Just like in cities, dogs are required to be licensed and have their rabies vaccinations. Animals must be under the owner’s control at all times.
- For information about dog licensing and control of stray pets...