



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Activity Responses

Each list is a combination of everything written down on a posted note and conversational points raised by meeting attendees.

Environmental Sustainability

Strengths

- Citizen involvement
- Farm land and agricultural community
- Limestone base
- Local expertise and agencies that can combine for technical planning
- Collaboration and cooperation between Park District and Conservation District
- Outstanding climate of volunteers
- Location, location, location (close to Chicago and Madison)
- Dedicated professionals
- Prime farmland
- Strong and wonderful Conservation District
- Agency preparedness for natural or environmental disasters
- Agricultural community – local goods and appreciation/family dedication
- Availability of natural resources – prime soil, available ground water/water supply, riparian areas/natural habitat
- Organizational focus to protect our natural resources
- Commitment to farm heritage
- Local community has a unified voice – rural character, farm and agribusiness, conservation and stewardship
- Many areas with a high recharge rate
- Water Preservation and Protection Action Committee (Ken and Dan are co-chairs) with an interest in protecting ground water and ground water recharge
- Boone County's highway system
- Good public participation
- Climate change and natural disasters - strong systematic planning process between departments to address those two issues



Weaknesses

- High residential taxes
- No recycling for rural residents
- The high recharge rate makes us very susceptible to contamination of the aquifers
- Studies/resources performed to understand quantity and quality of natural resources are out of date
- We need more employment opportunities
- We look like greenfield (undeveloped), yet our drainage system is complex. It is expensive and not easily repaired. Currently, there is no required underground drainage study for new developments.
- Apathy
- Lack of implementation for existing plans and projects
- Educate the community – preparedness for natural/environmental health disasters
- Need a unified effort to save water
- Community participation – active involvement in groups and organizations at the beginning, but after a while it becomes 2-5 people that are actively involved, need to step-up!
- Permitted uses in A-1 not necessarily agriculture compatible and require too much farmland
- Segregation of efforts
- Local champions lead a lot of the grass roots movements, lack of a variety of financial support
- Lack of studies completed on groundwater quality to inform our county board about future mitigation strategies or land use updates (i.e. bedrock, soil, wildlife)
- Not all wetlands have been identified

Opportunities

- Market agritourism more broadly
- Winter outdoor opportunities especially in northern Boone County
- Destinations that people want to come to (ex. restaurants)
- Capitalize on and educate about agritourism
- More sidewalks and streetlights
- Use of green space for recreation to benefit economics (use of long prairie trail for business)
- Ability to protect open space – agricultural easements
- Utilize internships opportunities. We are close to many colleges and universities.
- Update wetlands database
- Large % of open areas that have not been committed to any particular direction
- Protect riparian areas (class A)
- Unified efforts to save water
- Large % of open space and capacity for programming
- School District consolidation



- Intergovernmental sharing of public services and resources - Townships sharing equipment and salt
- Public-private partnerships – funding + volunteer

Challenges

- Soil susceptible to contamination
- How to communicate to all ages about opportunities to get outside and enjoy our environment
- Unfunded mandates
- How to communicate local issues and news
- Funding of everything – choices must be made – need a funding allocation strategy
- Get families – especially kids outside
- Allowing development without losing greenspace and natural resources
- Apathy
- Large percentage of land is owned by out of county citizens
- Involvement of youth with natural resources and agricultural activities
- Acknowledging the need for varied businesses to generate tax dollars
- How to inform and debate issues that need more than 140 characters – social media pushes to a binary solution
- Need to coordinate
- Bring down tax burden for everyone
- Northern Boone School District has no industrial base
- Attracting new residents

General Comments

These responses are a collection of all statements written on the comment page (last page of the packet.)

- How does Boone County propose to increase the “attractability” of the area to attract new businesses and new residents to the area?
- What does this area have to offer to these new businesses and residents?
- McHenry County volunteer network – Boone County needs one
- Need to draw input from Hispanic population – not involved in leadership
- Universities are willing to do things like soil studies and classroom services. Reach out to them to develop a student project.