

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

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[Back Issues](#)

“Our company has indeed, stumbled on to some of its new products. But never forget that you can only stumble if you're moving.”

-Richard Carlton-

MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
BCEDC Board Meeting	June 11 th	10 AM – noon	Washburn Library
2007 Entrepreneur's Conference	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
Aquaculture Field Day & Vendor Fair	June 14 – 15	All Day	Bayfield & Red Cliff - NADF
Inland Sea Kaya Symposium	June 14-17	All Day	Washburn WI
Midwest Renewable Energy Fair	June 15-17	All Day	Custer, WI
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference & Workshops	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable
Pie & Politics	June 28 th	Evening	Big Top Chautauqua
Lake Superior Day	July 15 th	All Day	Lake Superior Basin
Bayfield County Lakes Forum Annual Meeting	August 18th	9:00-11:00 AM	Iron River Community Center
Great Lakes Restoration Conference	Sept 6-8	All Day	Chicago

PLEASE NOTE: The *Midwest Renewable Energy Fair* is held in Custer, WI, not as previously listed in Amherst, WI. I am intent on making a day trip to the Fair on Friday, June 15th. My van will accommodate a few extra passengers. If you are interested in joining me, please call.

GRANNY FLATS

Housing is a foundation consideration for community planning and development. Significant economic development doesn't happen without a lot of stars lining up across space and time. Try as it might, a community may not be able to control the critical element or elements that can nurture a new or existing business. Housing is one element that communities can influence.

The **Michigan Land Use Institute** provided a new outlook on housing development in a recent [article](#) by **Carolyn Kelly**. The article's focus is on Alternative Housing Units or “Granny Flats.”

Four Northwest lower Michigan cities, **Traverse City, Petoskey, Frankfurt, and Suttons Bay** are examples of responses to situational realities not unlike Northwest Wisconsin. Years back, widows would convert carriage buildings into living quarters to enable rental of the main home to seasonal residents. The 100-year-old tradition has been revisited and revived to provide rental units for seasonal workers while also enabling adaptive responses to contemporary realities such as enabling the baby boom generation to provide close-to-home care for aging parents.

The **City of Bayfield** has a shortage of affordable housing and is looking for solutions. The shortage is limiting suitable workforce and undermining potential business expansions. Michigan may have an idea that will help.

The biggest difference between these Michigan cities and Northwest Wisconsin areas, with Bayfield a notable exception, is that the Michigan area is, perhaps, ten years ahead of Northwest Wisconsin. The good news is that Northwest Wisconsin has a bit of time to plan. Housing is a really big deal and has received mixed attention in comprehensive planning in Bayfield County. We may not be as ready for the future as we should be.

The Bayfield County Zoning Committee has been struggling while looking, I fear too timidly, at long term planning.

The Bayfield County Land Use Plan completed several years ago has many elements of the “Smart Growth” or Comprehensive Plan mandated by Wisconsin law to be in place by 2010. Yet an unmet challenge remains. This challenge is to take the additional steps needed to convert the Land Use Plan to a “Comp Plan” that is fully compliant with Wisconsin statutes. One apparent step toward compliance was to redefine the Zoning Department as the **Planning and Zoning Department**. Accordingly the staff in the Bayfield County Zoning Department have taken on a role somewhat akin to a Planning Commission.

I'm not at all sure this role is a good idea; department staff have their hands full with day-to-day obligations of explanation, application and enforcement, and mostly lack the credentials of professional planners. The result seems to be an opaque process in confusing limbo. A hallmark of Wisconsin's “Smart Growth” law is an emphasis on public involvement. I'm not particularly impressed with what I'm seeing for public participation. Perhaps I've missed something or my view is too limited.

A County Planning Commission, with sufficient resources and strong public representation, should be appointed to undertake, or at least underwrite and oversee, planning functions. The Bayfield County situation is not unlike that of many other regions. Plans are made and then put on a shelf to collect dust. A Commission would oversee a highly public process for moving the

County to compliance with Wisconsin statutes and establishing a sound comprehensive plan consistent with the many *Comp Plans* completed by Bayfield County Towns.

To assure effective coordination between local plans and County plans, enabling ordinances will be needed. Right now, many completed town comp plans are out of synch with County ordinances. The result is loss of a critical tool for the plan's implementation.

Last night, the **Town of Clover** (Herbster) Plan Commission began looking critically and with an eye toward implementation, at the housing section of it's comprehensive plan. The Plan has been quietly sitting on the shelf for a couple of years since it's completion. Now with new and energized leadership from Town Chair **Frank Koehn** and Plan Commission Chair **Mike Seidel**, the Commission has blown off the light layer of dust and will examine the plan with a look at potential implementation options.

One powerful option is to look at changes in the zoning ordinance. The Town of Clover, like most Bayfield County Towns has opted to function under county zoning. Where Town and County zoning are in conflict, or perhaps better stated "out of synch", there is a worthwhile option in creating, within the County zoning ordinances, overlay districts. An overlay district enables a Town to provide more restrictive – or simply different – zoning preference. Bayfield County should encourage Town planning activity by installing and energizing a public process for progressive change to it's zoning ordinance.

Application of different strategies based on common values and principles, seems to have guided Michigan communities to effective solutions to contemporary challenges. There may be a future opportunity embedded in both their methods and their ideas.

LIGHTER SIDE:

from : Brain Jay Gould

Addressed to University Admissions

Dear Sir,

I have received your acceptance for admission, and I regret to inform you that I will not be attending your university in coming years.

As a senior in high school, I have applied to many other fine institutions to further my education. And, although yours ranks high among them, I'm afraid that you failed to qualify.

Elimination under my system doesn't mean that you are not qualified to educate other fine young men and women. It merely reflects the high caliber of colleges and universities competing for my acceptance.

My best wishes for your future.

Sincerely,
Brain Jay Gould

Take care and have a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.

In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) *Director*

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) *Director*

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) *US Delegation Co-Chair*

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) *Co-owner*

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), *Owner*

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) *Member*

The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.