

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.

Herbster, WI, January 25th – Volume 4: Number 4 [Back Issues](#)

“Every wall is a door.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson-

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>
Biodiesel Study Group	Mondays (all)	7:00-8:30 PM	Washburn Library
Conservation Lobby Day	Jan. 30 th	9:00 am & On	Madison
National Entrepreneurship Week Feb 23 – Mar 1			
Superior Days	Feb. 26-27	All Day	Madison
Great Lakes Day	Feb. 28 th	All Day	Washington DC
Fusion 2008	March 5-6	All Day	Madison, Fluno Center
BCEDC Board Meeting	March 10th	10:00 -Noon	Washburn Library
Sustainable Business Conference	April 24-25	All Day	Ashland
Business Development Conference	May 7 & 8	All Day	Cable, Lakewoods
Green By Design Conference	June 12-13	All Day	Washington DC area
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference	June 19 & 20	All Day	Cable, Telemark

A Town's Tough Choice

It has been a cold week in Herbster.

In addition to an icy blast of cold air, the Town of Clover (Herbster) received a chilly notice that a grant proposal submitted to the **Wisconsin Coastal Management Council** was not

funded. The proposal may have been somewhat snake-bit from the beginning with Town folks divided. Suspicions about motives and fears about commitments of Town funds managed to drive a wedge solidly down the middle of both Highway 13 and Lenawee Road.

The benign intent of a few folks was to look at the very valuable 50.4 acres of town owned land that sits on the beautiful sandy shore of Lake Superior, currently used for a campground, and see what might be done to plan for the future use or uses of this land and some adjoining town owned property.

A few other folks were either sure a plan was unnecessary or that everything was just fine as it currently is.

An attempt to do a "survey" of residents and non-resident land owners may well add fuel to which ever side of the fire one may choose to sit. But, then, heat is often accompanied by light; a value to be measured, even when the light is dim and low quality.

Past experience had revealed, among other things, that the campground has been a significant revenue generator for the Town, providing 5-10% of the total revenue needed for town operations. The net campground revenue dwarfed some other revenue sources including PILT (Payments In Lieu of Taxes) from the federal lands of the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest that comprise nearly 50% of the Town's land area. Crowding at the campground on peak weekends certainly suggested greater revenue potential. However, facilities including showers and toilets were either non-existent or inadequate. Campsites for tents and RV's were remnants of casual planning 20 years ago. Some campsites were grossly overused, some not used at all. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce, which is charged with oversight of campgrounds, has been looking the other way and allowing the use of portable toilets for several years. Improvements were clearly needed.

The Coastal Management technical review of the proposal was generous, recognizing the need for planning, but gently criticizing the proposal that it lacked a solid timetable for the planning and that greater detail was needed to explain how the campground plan would provide protection for the coastal land. The review committee recommended that with close liaison between town planners and Coastal Management staff, a much stronger application could be submitted in another year. Unfortunately the right time to plan may be now.

Lack of funding from Coastal Management should not deter the Herbster community from thinking and engaging in dialog about future uses of the property. A piece of this size would likely fetch enough money that if prudently invested as a trust, just interest alone could provide the Town with revenue equal to or greater than that derived from campground operations. An increase in the tax base would drive the potential benefit of commercial real estate development even higher. If real estate in general was more robust today, it would be hard to argue against selling the land to a high and otherwise solid bidder with a good track record for conservation development.

The Town folks will face tough choices about how best to use this valuable asset. I don't know how to get to good decisions without a lot of give and take in which participants suspend assumptions, ask a lot of questions and treat one another as equals. Grant funding would have provided professionally facilitated discussion and engaged a cadre of engineering and

architectural professionals to support development of a sound plan that would be sensitive to and consistent with a broad range of input from the community.

Now, I fear, the future use of this valuable piece of property may go to a high bidder. Or, it may remain in a state of controlled neglect, interrupted by sporadic change spawned by hubris, and led by a few folks with loud, and sometimes belligerent, voices.

My confidence for the future has been chilled by the Winter blast.

LIGHTER SIDE:

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; "Thanks!" Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

It was so cold this past week:

- **Jim's** auto shop in Herbster, usually kept busy from Deer Collisions, was doing a booming business - repairing damage from iceberg collisions.
- **Presidential candidates** had to keep their hands in their OWN pockets.
- A recent poll in **Ashland** indicted that 92% of the inhabitants no longer considered global warming a bad thing.
- **Fred Schnook** actually ordered Hot Cocoa at the Packers Game.
- The geese left **Bark Bay Estuary** and took the water with them. Folks in Texas were convinced they saw a UFO.

Take care and enjoy 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 role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.