

IV. THE LAND & WATER

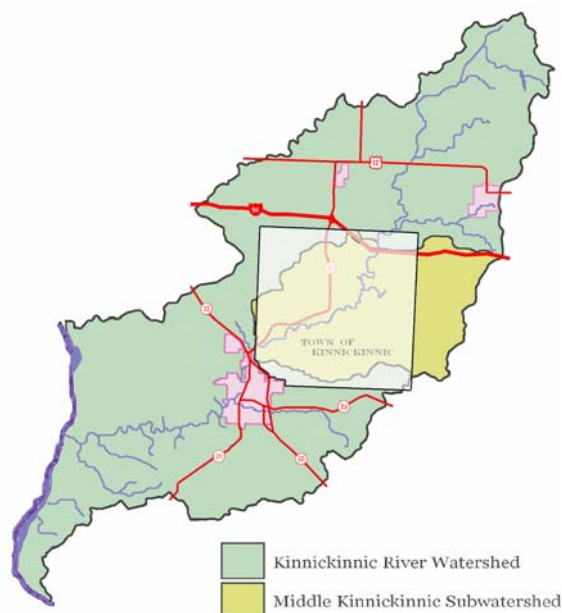
The Town of Kinnickinnic contains a wealth of natural resources. The most notable among these is the Kinnickinnic River with all of the ecological and recreational amenities that accompany it. In addition, the town also has a series of soils well suited to crop production and an ample amount of forested lands that supply habitat for wildlife, timber resources for landowners, and recreational opportunities for visitors.

The River

The Kinnickinnic River is a spring-fed stream of national renown. Its cold waters allow for naturally reproducing populations of brown, brook, and rainbow trout, earning the river its designation as a Class I trout stream and placing it among Wisconsin's premier fly-fishing destinations. Twelve public access points exist along the stretch of the river that passes through the town. This improved access helps further make the Town of Kinnickinnic an attractive place for many from the Twin Cities and beyond to come for recreation.

The Town of Kinnickinnic exists entirely within the Kinnickinnic River Watershed, the greater land area that drains into the Kinnickinnic River. Furthermore, most of the township is situated inside the Middle Kinnickinnic Subwatershed, as is recognized by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin DNR and the Land Conservation Departments of Pierce and St. Croix counties. This smaller watershed is responsible for much of the drainage into the portion of the river that crosses the Town of Kinnickinnic (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Kinnickinnic River Watershed and Subwatershed



In 1999, the *Kinnickinnic River Watershed Project* cited the Middle Kinnickinnic Subwatershed as responsible for more than half of the sediment load to the Kinnickinnic River. Since then, land conservation officials have made a continued effort to work with area residents to implement agricultural and conservation strategies in order to mitigate the effects of runoff erosion from adjacent croplands.

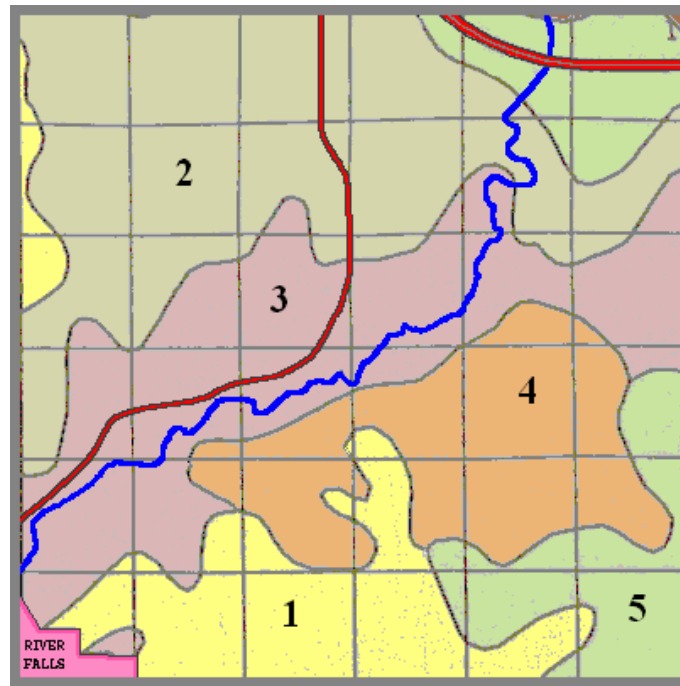
Currently, developers' interest in land adjacent to the river continues to intensify. This pressure may result in the transformation of land uses along the river from agricultural to residential. Such a transformation will likely bring forth new issues concerning water quality and the integrity of wildlife habitat.

The soils






The soils in the Town of Kinnickinnic are primarily silt loams. Many of them are suitable for agricultural production as well as physically sound for buildings, roads, and septic systems. This provides for a variety of land use options within the town (see Figure 14).

The town has the opportunity to consider the soils present inside its borders the when planning for development. For instance, the northwest quarter of the township contains large expanses of Santiago silt loams supportive to both cultivation, as well as dwellings. In contrast, lands at the northeast and southeast corners of the town contain a lot of Vlasaty soils which present limitations to dwellings and septic systems, but remain suitable for agriculture. The suitability of soils for different uses should be addressed when considering planning options such as rezoning to allow for different uses. Furthermore, if preserving agriculture is a goal of the town, then the town has the opportunity to identify and define "prime farmland" within its boundaries in an effort to direct development away from some of the most productive soils in large areas.

Figure 14: General Soil Associations in the Town of Kinnickinnic



General Soil Associations in the Town of Kinnickinnic

1.  RITCHEY-DERINDA-WHALAN: Well drained and moderately well drained, gently sloping to very steep, medium-textured soils. Soils underlain by limestone or shale at relatively shallow depths.
2.  SANTIAGO-OTTERHOLT-ARLAND: Well drained, gently sloping to steep, medium-textured soils on till plains. Soils underlain by sandstone at a relatively shallow depth, or soils that have a thick mantle of wind-blown silt.
3.  SATTRE-PILLOT-ANTIGO: Well drained, level to sloping, medium-textured soils on outwash plains and stream terraces.
4.  PLAINFIELD-BOONE: Excessively drained, gently sloping to moderately steep, coarse-textured soils on outwash plains and stream terraces. Soils underlain by sandstone at a relatively shallow depth.
5.  VLASATY-SKYBERG: Moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained, level to sloping, medium-textured soils on till plains.

Habitats, aesthetics, and recreation

The scenic character of the Town of Kinnickinnic can be considered a natural resource worth considering when planning for future development. Presently, the town contains a great deal of open space, as well as woodlands throughout a highly variable topography. This varying landscape has both beautiful aesthetics and a diversity of wildlife habitats, both of which can be considered resources worth assessing.

A number of lands in the town are already established as management or preservation areas. Most of these were established for protecting the Kinnickinnic River's cold water habitat, which can be easily altered by the effects nearby land uses (see Figure 15). In addition to these lands, there are also a number of easements on privately owned lands along the river that provide protection, and public access in number of cases.

The Town of Kinnickinnic is also home to an 80 acre forest owned and managed by St. Croix County. This land contains a parking area and hiking trails, giving visitors an opportunity to access its resources. In addition to the forest, there are approximately 10 miles of county managed snowmobile trails in the town, as well as 13 miles of state-identified rural bike routes.

The town of Kinnickinnic has the opportunity to plan for development in a way that both preserves and utilizes the natural habitats, as well as the open space aesthetics. Along with the recreational opportunities already afforded along the river, the town has an opportunity to encourage new subdivisions to integrate trail systems with existing public lands, recreational trails and bike routes into an extended network.

Figure 15: Management and preservation areas in the Town of Kinnickinnic

Issues:

River

- High development pressure for lands adjacent to the river.
- Diminished environmental quality issues with development at or near the river.
- Potential loss of property rights associated with protecting the river from development.

Agricultural Lands

- Loss of agriculturally viable lands due to increased development.
- Disappearing rural characteristic due to loss of agricultural land use.

Habitats

- Loss of terrestrial wildlife habitat due to fragmenting development patterns.

Aesthetics

- Loss of rural aesthetics to suburban residential development patterns.
- Loss of scenic quality presently enjoyed by town residents and visitors.

Opportunities:

River

- Increase the number of residential units based on the attractiveness of the river.
- Promote the preservation of current aesthetics near the river, maintaining its natural beauty for the pleasure of the town's residents as well as visitors.
- Find ways to strengthen the town's association with the river's notoriety, enhancing tourism in the town.
- Implement strategies that aim to protect the ecological integrity of the river, a result of which will assist preservation of the river's naturally reproducing trout populations.

Agricultural Lands

- Implement strategies to preserve prime agricultural lands from development.
- Implement strategies to promote agricultural land use within the township.

Habitats

- Implement strategies to protect specified critical wildlife habitats and habitat corridors within the town.
- Implement incentive-based strategies to encourage developers to preserve and connect habitat areas.

Aesthetics

- Implement strategies to preserve the aesthetic quality of the town.
- In conjunction with habitat protection, develop strategies to promote the preservation of the natural aesthetic at the individual site level.