

Intergovernmental Cooperation

In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address, identify, and resolve issues of mutual interest. Many issues cross jurisdictional boundaries, affecting more than one community. Air, water, and wildlife pass over the landscape regardless of boundaries so that one jurisdiction's activities with regard to air, water, and wildlife impact other jurisdictions downwind and/or downstream. Increased communication technologies and personal mobility mean that people, money, and resources also move across jurisdictions. Frequently, the action of one governmental unit impacts others.

Town of Round Lake Intergovernmental Relationships

The Town of Round Lake shares municipal borders with six Towns, one county and has relations with a number of state, federal and regional agencies including:

- Town of Chippewa (Ashland County)
- Town of Hayward
- Town of Hunter
- Town of Lenroot
- Town of Spider Lake
- Town of Winter
- Ashland County
- Sawyer County
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Hayward School District
- Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indian
- Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Land
- Wisconsin State Elections Commission
- U.S. Forest Service (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest)
- U. S. Department of Agriculture

Relationship to Town of Chippewa (Ashland County) - The eastern boundary of the Town of Round Lake borders the Town of Chippewa in Ashland County. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Chippewa.

Relationship to Town of Hayward - The western boundary of the Town of Round Lake borders the Town of Hayward. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Hayward.

Relationship to Town of Hunter - The Town of Round Lake shares most of its southern border with the Town of Hunter. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Hunter.

Relationship to Town of Lenroot - The northwestern corner of the Town of Round Lake borders the Town of Lenroot. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Lenroot.

Relationship to Town of Spider Lake - The Town of Round Lake shares most of its northern border with Spider Lake. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Spider Lake.

Relationship to Town of Winter - The southeastern portion of the Town of Round Lake is adjacent to the Town of Winter. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Winter.

Relationship to Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) - Parcels of LCO tribal land border the Town of Round Lake. The Town of Round Lake has a limited and respectful relationship with LCO. It has a working relationship with LCO through the county wide mutual aid fire department agreement. LCO provides no services to the Town of Round Lake.

Relationship to Sawyer County - Sawyer County has some jurisdiction within the Town of Round Lake. In particular, Sawyer County has jurisdiction over land divisions, on-site sanitary sewer systems, and zoning (including shore land, wetland, and floodplain areas) in the Town. Sawyer County also owns and maintains County Trunk Highways and the Sawyer County Forest. In areas where the county has jurisdiction in the Town, the county attempts to gain input from the Town before making decisions affecting Town land use. Likewise, the Town has attempted to maintain open lines of communication with Sawyer County. The Town of Round Lake has a good working relationship with Sawyer County. Services provided to the Town by Sawyer County include, but are not limited to the following:

- Highway Department: Help with road projects/bridge aid
- Zoning
- Public Health
- Emergency Government
- Ambulance
- Soil & Water Conservation assistance
- Transit
- Police/Sheriff protection

Relationship to Ashland County - The Ashland County line forms the eastern boundary of the Town. This close proximity requires the Town of Round Lake to communicate with Ashland County from time to time. This helps to minimize or mitigate potential problems that may arise on road maintenance (reciprocity agreements) or the sharing of other services. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Ashland County.

Relationship to Northwest Regional Planning Commission - The Town of Round Lake is within the boundaries of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC). Technical and professional services from NWRPC are available and have been utilized by the Town.

Relationship to Hayward Community School District - Currently, the Hayward School District does not have any facilities located within the Town of Round Lake and does not have a plan to construct any new facilities in the Town at this time. All of the schools (high, middle, intermediate, primary and charter schools) and the district offices are located in the City of Hayward. The Town has no formal relationship with the Hayward Community School District other than collection of levied tax monies.

Relationship to Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) - Through the DOR shared revenue program, the State of Wisconsin distributes tax revenues to units of government for law enforcement, road maintenance, fire protection, and general government administration.

Relationship to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) - Residents with issues concerning natural resources throughout the Town may call on the WDNR for assistance and guidance. The DNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection, the long term management of the State Public Trust Waters, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas, and the sustainable management of storm water regulations. The Town works directly with the WDNR for the following: Permitting processes required for ongoing road/and or bridge construction projects; Assistance/ review of certain ordinances (examples; lake no-wake zone, ATV/UTV route, snowmobile access); In cooperation with Lake Associations to secure grants; Recycling; ATV/UTV/ snowmobile trail bridge wing; and lake water monitoring equipment.

Relationship to Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) - The WisDOT, among other things, dictates how much General Transportation Aids (GTA) the Town receives annually. Open communication and participation in land use decisions, which may impact the Town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation.

Relationship to Wisconsin State Elections Commission - The Town works directly with is the State Elections Commission through the state wide election and voter registration system (SVRS).

Relationship to Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands - The Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands or "BCPL" is a state agency responsible for maintaining an extensive archive of land records including those of the Town of Round Lake, managing Wisconsin's School Trust Funds in support of public education, contributing to the state's sustainable timber economy, combating forest fragmentation, and securing public access to large blocks of northern forests.

Relationship to U.S. Forest Service - The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for the management of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, which takes up approximately 80% of the Town. The Town of Round Lake has a limited but good relationship with the federal government relative to national forest lands and forest roads located within the Town. The Town plows forest service roads as requested. Forest Service tries to provide the Town with gravel for maintenance of forest service roads at a reduced cost.

Relationship to U.S. Department of Agriculture - The United States Department of Agriculture is responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, and food that are applicable to the Town of Round Lake.

Town of Round Lake Agreements and Plans

Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2) (g) indicates that this element shall incorporate any agreements or plans to which the Town of Round Lake is a party under §66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. These include any agreements or plans relating to intergovernmental cooperation, boundary agreements and regional planning commissions. The following is a list (A) of known agreements between the Town of Round Lake and other adjacent or overlapping units of government and (B) a list of plans which may have an impact on the Town.

(A) Agreements

- The Town of Round Lake has informal agreements with Spider Lake and Ashland County on border roads. Where roads cross County borders, whichever municipality finds it most convenient will plow the road. Also where roads transverse multiple municipalities, paving of entire road surface will often be done at the same time cooperatively, versus one municipality doing one section and the other doing another section at a different time.
- The Town of Round Lake Fire Department provides fire and EMS service to the Town of Hunter by an annual paid contract.
- The Town of Round Lake has a facility agreement with the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) for WITC to use the Town of Round Lake Town Hall to conduct educational, training and group activities.

(B) Plans

- **Sawyer County Outdoor Recreation Plan (2014-2020)**
<https://www.sawyercountygov.org/DocumentCenter/View/377/Outdoor-Recreation-Plan-2014-2020-PDF>
- **Sawyer County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (2017-2026)**
<https://www.sawyercountygov.org/DocumentCenter/View/231/Resource-Management-Plan-2017-2026-PDF?bidId=>
- **Sawyer County Farmland Preservation Plan (2017)**
<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/FPBiennialReport20152017.pdf>
- **Sawyer County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2006)**
<https://www.sawyercountygov.org/DocumentCenter/View/320/Forestry-15-Year-Plan-Created-2006-PDF>
- **Sawyer County Plan for Outdoor Recreation (2014-2020)**
<https://www.sawyercountygov.org/DocumentCenter/View/377/Outdoor-Recreation-Plan-2014-2020-PDF>

- **Wisconsin State Highway Improvement Plan (2018-2023)**
<https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/projects/6yr-hwy-impr/overview/default.aspx>
- **The 2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan (2004)**
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cnnf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5117262>
- **The Travel Management Project-Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Access Plan(2008)**
https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5162321.pdf
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**
<http://www.nwrpc.com/DocumentCenter/View/666>
- **Sawyer County Hazard Mitigation Plan**
<http://www.nwrpc.com/DocumentCenter/View/770>
- **Town of Round Lake Emergency Operations Plan**
<http://www.Townofroundlakewi.org>

Intergovernmental Cooperation Benefits

There are many reasons intergovernmental cooperation makes sense. Follows are examples:

- **Cost savings** – Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can enable some communities to provide their residents with services that would otherwise be too costly.
- **Address regional issues** – By communicating and coordinating their actions, and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues which are regional in nature.
- **Early identification of issues** – Cooperation enables jurisdictions to identify and resolve potential conflicts at an early stage, before affected interests have established rigid positions, before the political stakes have been raised, and before issues have become conflicts or crises.
- **Reduced litigation** – Communities that cooperate are able to resolve issues before they become mired in litigation. Reducing the possibility of costly litigation can save money, as well as the disappointment and frustration of unwanted outcomes.
- **Consistency** – Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities and other jurisdictions.
- **Predictability** – Jurisdictions that cooperate provide greater predictability to residents, developers, businesses, and others. Lack of predictability can result in lost time, money, and opportunity.
- **Understanding** – As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another’s needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them.
- **Trust** – Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions.

- **History of success** – When jurisdictions cooperate successfully in one area, the success creates positive feelings and an expectation that other intergovernmental issues can be resolved as well.
- **Service to citizens** – The biggest beneficiaries of intergovernmental cooperation are citizens who can benefit from costs savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

Existing and Potential Conflicts

The following identify existing and potential conflicts between the Town of Round Lake and other governmental units (adjacent and overlapping) and describe a process to resolve such conflicts.

- Potential problems exist with overlapping jurisdictions relative to zoning and development issues.
- The Town has multiple lakes that are located within several jurisdictions. Each municipality may have different criteria for judging how, or to what level development should occur on a given body of water.
- Potential conflicts may arise over the use of forest trails and/or roads traversing several jurisdictions. Different municipalities may want to focus on and promote different uses; for example, biking, skiing, snowmobiling and ATV/UTV/UTV use.
- Additional areas of conflict have and may continue to occur as a result of the Town of Round Lake being covered under Sawyer County Zoning. The Town and County do not always agree on rezoning and conditional use permits.

Conflict Resolution

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Town of Round Lake’s Intergovernmental Cooperation Element identify processes to resolve conflicts and disputes between the Town of Round Lake and other units of government.

- **Mediation** – A cooperative process involving two or more parties and a mediator. The mediator, a neutral third party with special skills and training in dispute resolution, helps the parties voluntarily reach a mutually agreeable settlement of the issue in dispute.
- **Binding arbitration** – A process where a neutral person is given the authority to make a legally binding decision and is used only with the consent of all of the parties. The parties present evidence and examine witnesses and the arbitrator makes a determination based on evidence.
- **Non-binding arbitration** – A technique in which a neutral person is given the authority to render a non-binding decision as a basis for subsequent negotiations between the parties after the parties’ present evidence and examine the witnesses.
- **Early neutral evaluation** – A process in which a neutral person evaluates brief written and oral presentations early in the litigation process. The neutral person provides an initial appraisal of the merits of the case with suggestions for conducting discovery and obtaining a legal ruling to resolve the case as efficiently as possible.

- **A focus group** – Used to resolve disputes by using a panel of citizens selected in a manner agreed upon by all of the parties. The citizens hear presentations from the parties and, after hearing the issues, the focus group deliberates and renders an advisory opinion.
- **A mini-trial** – Consists of presentations by the parties to a panel of selected and authorized by all the parties to negotiate a settlement of the dispute that, after the presentations, considers the legal and factual issues and attempts to negotiate a settlement.
- **A moderated settlement conference** – A process in which conferences are conducted by a neutral person, who hears brief presentations from the parties, in order to facilitate negotiations. The neutral person renders an advisory opinion in aid of negotiation.
- **A summary jury trial** – A technique where attorneys make abbreviated presentations to a small jury selected from the regular jury list. The jury renders an advisory decision to help the parties assess their position to aid future negotiation.

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