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MINUTES– As Amended and Approved

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Update Committee

DATE: Wednesday, December 14, 2011
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Brookens Administrative Center
John Dimit Conference Room
1776 E. Washington St.
Urbana, Illinois

Voting Members Present: Kevin Donoho, Debra Griest, Liz Jones, Kyle Krapf, Steve Moser (via conference call), Patti Petrie, Bruce Stickers, Steve Stierwalt

Voting Members Absent:

Non-Voting Member Present: John Hall

Others Present: Hal Barnhart, Norman Stenzel, Brad Uken

CCRPC Facilitator: Susan Monte

Call to Order and Roll Call

Griest called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Griest, Krapf, Moser (via conference call), Stierwalt, Petrie, Stickers, and Hall were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Krapf to approve the agenda; seconded by Donoho. Motion carried with unanimous support.

Public Participation

Hal Barnhart, 469 CR 1500 N, Champaign, commented regarding the proposed increase of points for SA Factor 9 and reducing points for SA Factor 7 as per Item 3, Attachment E. Barnhart made the point that in identifying the number of non-farm residents within one mile, there is no differentiation between existing farmsteads which may have been partitioned and sold off as opposed to new residential development. Barnhart observed that Champaign County land use policy and County Zoning Ordinance requirements appear contradictory, with the County allowing for 4 lots by right on 40 acres which potentially translates to 64 lots per square mile, and that level of density could be considered as detrimental to the viability of agriculture and, if so, then some reconciliation—either in the Zoning Ordinance or in the LESA factor-- appears in order. Barnhart encouraged the Committee to consider recommending a definition of Best Prime Farmland based on more than just soil qualities, and to consider the overall LESA score as an indicator of Best Prime Farmland.

1
2 Norman Stenzel, 545A CR 1900 N, Champaign, said it is his opinion that the development of the LESA
3 instrument has been flawed. Stenzel suggested the County use the updated LESA system on a trial basis for
4 three months and, at the same time, use the existing LESA system so as to accumulate a new set of data and
5 then compare outcomes. Stenzel said the process should be reviewed at that point, possibly by this
6 Committee and perhaps by an external Committee who has not been involved in the instrument
7 development.

8
9 Approval of Minutes

10
11 **Motion** by Krapf to approve the minutes of November 29, 2011; seconded by Stierwalt. Donoho said on page 4,
12 lines 6 and 7 were fragmented and the idea is not clear. Donoho said lines 13 through 16 address improvements
13 to the descriptions and scoring instruction and he requested that explanation regarding the confusion should be
14 added. Monte agreed to add the explanation that more clarification is needed to the instructions for scoring to
15 assure that scoring occur in a consistent fashion. Hall noted that on page 5, at the top of the page, that the
16 sentence should begin with 'Jones asked.' Donoho discussed with Petrie his confusion regarding her reference
17 regarding 'self-defeating' on the bottom of page 4 on line 49. Griest suggested that the pronoun 'it' be replaced
18 with the clause 'raising the LE to 92' as clarification of the comment.

19
20 Jones entered the meeting at approximately 6:50 p.m.

21
22 **Motion to approve the minutes as modified failed.** Griest said the draft minutes will be returned to Monte for
23 corrections to be made.

24
25 Best Prime Farmland Recommendation

26
27 Monte reviewed the two proposals from Hall that were provided to the Committee regarding recommendations
28 for defining Best Prime Farmland: one with an added provision regarding 30 percent Best Prime Farmland on a
29 subject site as qualifying the site; and one restructuring a definition of Best Prime Farmland based only on the
30 top scoring soils (in Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2) and including a provision regarding 10 percent Best Prime
31 Farmland on a subject site as qualifying. Monte described the distributed maps of LE soils distribution for LE's of
32 85, 92, and 95.

33
34 Petrie requested Hall provide his rationale for the two proposals, and asked what would be gained by redefining
35 Best Prime Farmland as proposed. Hall explained that if an LE of 85 to define Best Prime Farmland were to
36 remain, that having an LE of 85 would actually increase amount of Best Prime Farmland from 80% to 85% of
37 County soils. Hall said that the two alternative definitions seek to add protection for Agriculture Value Groups
38 1 and 2 soils. He said that the LE equal 85 approach fails when considering some combinations of soils on a
39 subject site. Hall reviewed two examples: 1) using an LE of 85, Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils are not
40 protected if they comprise less than 50% of soils on a subject site and the balance of soils on the site are soils in
41 Agriculture Value Group 6, stating that in this example, the average LE is less than 85; and 2) using an LE of 85
42 fails to protect Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils on a subject site when comprising less than 40% of a
43 subject site in combination with Agriculture Value Group 5 soils.

44
45 Hall said if the objective is to try to minimize the loss of Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils, then a significant
46 loss of soils in Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 is of concern. Hall said that selecting the percentage of
47 Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils to protect on a subject site will be critical and that 10% or greater of
48 Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 might be valid to consider as significant.

49
50

1 Petrie questioned the reasons for Best Prime Farmland and of assigning the LE value of 100 to Best Prime
2 Farmland. Petrie said that, based on the growth projections and LRMP 2030 Future Land Use Map, that sufficient
3 land exists to accommodate expected development over the next 10 years, and that she believes that changing
4 the LE from 85 will enhance sprawl development.
5

6 Hall said that, based on the updated soils data, retaining the LE of 85 as a basis for the Best Prime Farmland
7 definition would be equivalent to lowering the LE from 85 to 79. Petrie proposed that the LE not be increased to
8 95 and that the Committee reconsider the need for Best Prime Farmland since the concept of Best Prime
9 Farmland tends to confuse the County Board.
10

11 Hall explained that using the average LE as basis for a definition of Best Prime Farmland fails to protect the
12 Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils on a subject site if certain combinations of other soils are present.
13

14 Donoho explained that the Committee is now considering setting two bars in the definition of Best Prime
15 Farmland. Donoho said that identifying an LE threshold number could be secondary to identifying a percentage
16 of Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 on a subject site to be protected. Donoho pointed out that, in most cases,
17 parcels contain a mixture of soils, and that having a good understanding of what typically happens regarding the
18 mixing of the percentages of soils will be very helpful in setting the bar and qualifying in with the additional
19 percentage as suggested in the four definitions: 90, 92, 93 and 94.
20

21 Stickers said he supports including a provision to protect a percentage of Best Prime Farmland soils on a subject
22 site as part of the Best Prime Farmland definition, and that adding such a provision will make the LESA tool even
23 better.
24

25 Jones mentioned that a divergence factor regarding how much difference there is between soils on a subject site,
26 be considered. Jones explained that if there is a divergence on the soil of 'x', then some other factor could be
27 considered.
28

29 Petrie requested example applications of the recommended Best Prime Farmland definition proposals. Monte
30 suggested that the field test sites and the test rural residential overlay test sites could be considered. Hall
31 reviewed information regarding Agriculture Value Groups of soils on approved rural residential overlay sites.
32 Members discussed how the rural residential overlay test sites scored with regard to the SA Factor of 10 non-
33 farm dwellings within one mile.
34

35 Donoho said including a percentage of Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils on a subject site in the definition
36 impacts the selection of LE threshold number. Donoho referred to the analogy of 'setting two bars at the same
37 time,' and said his opinion is that the percentage factor could be of far greater importance than selecting an LE
38 threshold score.
39

40 Members discussed the revised Attachment E table dated December 7, 2011. Hall said that the LE maps provided
41 represent pure Agriculture Value Groups and are not intended to represent the all areas that would be protected
42 if the Best Prime Farmland definition includes a provision to protect some percentage of Agriculture Value
43 Groups 1 and 2. Hall said that defining what is a significant amount of Best Prime Farmland on a subject site is an
44 important task.
45

46 Griest observed that members were not ready to make a recommendation and asked for suggestions regarding
47 information that could be helpful to better understand the proposals to define Best Prime Farmland. Members
48 discussed applying an LE threshold number of 90 and 92 to field test sites. Hall noted that field test sites 3, 4, 6,
49 9, 13, 14, 16, and 17 have existing LE's that are mostly Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2, and so testing of these
50 sites would not yield new information.

1 Griest requested that in the next packet, staff provide, in a format that would enable the Committee to vote on
2 and move forward with a recommendation, both a proposed definition of Best Prime Farmland and a clarification
3 of the Attachment E table at both LE threshold levels of 90 and 92.
4

5 Members thanked Hall for preparing the table and proposing the alternatives for defining Best Prime Farmland.
6

7 LESA Update Draft revised December 5, 2011

8

9 Monte said that, based on the third round of field testing of the Draft LESA Update revised December 5, 2011,
10 the consistency of responses was an issue to address with regard to SA Factors 3 and 8. Monte said that specific
11 revisions featured in a strike-out version of the LESA Update Draft dated December 14, 2011 include: expanding
12 SA Factor 2 as proposed by Hall, and adjusting scoring of SA Factors 7 and 9 as proposed by Hall; adding clear
13 scoring instructions for SA factors 3 and 8; including an overview of SA Factors at the beginning of the document;
14 simplifying the scoring by removal of the option to interpolate; and minor editorial corrections. Monte
15 distributed the revised Draft dated December 14, 2011 to members.
16

17 Proposed SA Factor Adjustments

18

19 Petrie asked about the proposed adjustment of SA Factor 2, specifically how the proposed 25 acres relates to the
20 Zoning Ordinance, and why January 1, 2004 was selected as the reference date. Hall said the 25 acres is derived
21 from SA Factor 1 of the Draft LESA Update and is not related to the Zoning Ordinance, and that 2004 is the year
22 that the County adopted limits on the use of Best Prime Farmland, and the date is proposed because it make the
23 most sense based on the adoption of that Zoning Ordinance amendment.
24

25 Petrie asked what is gained from SA Factor 3 that is different than what is gained from SA Factor 7, and then how
26 SA Factor 7 compares to SA Factor 8. Monte said that SA Factor 3 measures the amount of a site's perimeter that
27 is adjacent to agricultural land use, and that SA Factor 7 measures the amount of land zoned AG-1, AG-2, or CR
28 within one mile of a subject site. Monte said that SA Factor 8 assesses the percentage of area in agricultural land
29 use. Krapf said that a parcel could be zoned in one way and actually used in a different way.
30

31 **Motion by Krapf to extend the meeting time to 8:30 p.m.; seconded by Donoho. Motion carried with**
32 **unanimous support.**
33

34 Monte reviewed the procedural guidelines proposed for SA Factor 8. Hall said that he believes assessing the
35 amount of agricultural land use in this way is a significant task and is worthwhile, with scores that are consistent
36 with expectations based on the proposed guidelines. Hall noted that the existing LESA does not include scoring
37 instructions.
38

39 Jones asked whether SA Factor 8 would be applied to RRO Test Site D which is located within the CUGA. Hall
40 explained that since the site is within the CUGA, this SA Factor is not considered.
41

42 Petrie asked whether it is even necessary to score any SA Factor other than SA Factor 5 for a subject site located
43 within the CUGA. Monte said that the five draft SA Factors that apply to all subject sites potentially provide
44 differentiation between subject sites, so they are worthwhile to retain. Monte said the first five SA Factors that
45 apply to all sites are not time consuming and are easy to respond to.
46

47 Petrie suggested that since SA Factor 11 appears to not come into play that often, then its value is questionable.
48 Hall said in his review of the approved 14 rural residential overlay zoning cases, only three had a public assembly
49 land use meeting the 200 threshold within one mile, and noted that, with a threshold of 200 persons, he believes
50 SA Factor 11 will not come into play that often. Members discussed the limited instances in the County where SA
51 Factor 11 could be applicable.

1
2 **Motion** by Petrie to remove SA Factor 11 and to re-assign those 10 points to SA Factor 2a. Seconded by Donoho.
3 Donoho said that doing so will place a greater emphasis on the LE score, however it is identified. Members
4 considered leaving the 10 points unassigned. Stierwalt suggested that the points should be assigned as
5 proposed, and then adjusted, if need be, based on the LE-related information to be reviewed at the next
6 meeting. Moser asked if the industrially zoned land north of Urbana on U.S. Route 45 is within the CUGA. Hall
7 confirmed that industrial area is within the CUGA. Moser asked whether the LESA Update Draft will be subject
8 to protest rights, and Hall responded that it is not, but that the LESA Update should be considered at a public
9 hearing because the LESA will be referenced as rezoning cases are considered.

10
11 Griest asked for a voice vote. **Motion carried, with 7 in favor, and 1 opposed.**

12
13 Field Test Results

14
15 Monte said members should provide field-test related feedback they may have regarding application of the latest
16 Draft LESA Update revised December 14, 2011, to be further revised based on changes agreed on at the meeting
17 today.

18
19 Next Meeting Date

20
21 Members agreed to hold the next Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. Moser
22 agreed to participate on January 4th via conference call from Florida.

23
24 Adjournment

25
26 Griest adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

27
28 Respectfully submitted,

29
30 Susan Monte, LESA Update Committee Facilitator
31



Date: December 6, 2011
To: LESA Update Committee
From: Susan Monte, Committee Facilitator
Regarding: Meeting 11 on Wednesday December 14

This memo expands on selected agenda items for review by the Committee on December 14.

Best Prime Farmland Recommendation

Information to assist in review of potential LE values as a threshold for Best Prime Farmland (BPF) is provided. Attachment A includes example draft BPF definitions based on an LE threshold of 90, 92, 93 and 94. Attachment B is a general comparison at a countywide level of the distribution of soils with an LE of 90 and LE of 94. Attachment C is a display of the distribution of soils with an LE of 92 or greater in the CUGA and fringe areas outside the CUGA around the Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy areas.

Draft LESA Update revised December 5, 2011

As reviewed by the Committee and, subject to further revisions, the Draft LESA Update revised December 5, 2011 is provided as part of this packet. Modifications included in this draft are:

- percentages of total county soils added for each soil series in Table 1
- revisions to SA Factor 6
- clarifications to the SA Factor narratives
- minor editorial corrections throughout draft

Further Field Testing

The Committee agreed to test the Draft LESA Update revised 12/5/2011 on the following test sites:

- eleven Field Test Sites recently tested (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 17 from the original 18)
- four RRO Test Sites (RRO Test Sites A, B, C, and D). Please note that the four RRO Test Sites selected for testing include three RRO sites not previously reviewed by the Committee.

Attachment D is a field test form for recording your responses. If feasible, please share your results with me, or forward any questions regarding field testing to me, on or prior to Tuesday, December 13.

Proposed Revisions to Draft LESA Update and BPF Definition

Attachment E contains proposals from John Hall to:

- Revise SA Factor #2
- Add a new SA Factor #3
- Revise points for SA Factor #7 (% of land zoned rural) and SA Factor #9 (distance to 10 non-farm dwellings)
- Revise the definition of Best Prime Farmland (Note: proposed revision is featured in the Example BPF Definitions in Attachment A.)

Attachments

- A Example Draft BPF Definitions
- B Distribution of soils with an LE of 90 or greater and LE of 94 or greater
- C Distribution of soils with an LE of 92 or greater in CUGA area around Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy
- D Field Test Response Form
- E Proposed Revisions to Draft LESA Update and BPF Definition and Accompanying Table

Attachment D
FIELD TEST SITE RESULTS

TS 1	1	size of subject site	40 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	1.28 miles to Philo corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	98.7%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.76 to 1 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
			SA	
			LE	95
			Total LESA	
TS 2	1	size of subject site	14.77 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	30%	
	4	adjacent to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	Yes	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	24%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	20%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	adjacent	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	Flex-N-Gate within 0.76 to 1 mile	
			SA	
			LE	87
			Total LESA	
TS 4	1	size of subject site	80 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	adjacent to Savoy corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	Yes	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	87%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	73%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.51 to 0.75 miles	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	0.76 to 1 miles to Willard Airport	
			SA	
			LE	100
			Total LESA Score	

Attachment D
FIELD TEST SITE RESULTS

TS 7	1	size of subject site	79.5 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	4.2 miles to Thomasboro corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	99%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	99%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.51 to 0.75 miles	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				93

TS 8	1	size of subject site	15.25 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	1.63 miles to St. Joseph corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	94%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.51 to 0.75 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				88

TS 10	1	size of subject site	160 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	3.9 miles to Pesotum corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7a	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	100%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	assume more than 1 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				91

Attachment D
FIELD TEST SITE RESULTS

TS 11	1	size of subject site	23.04 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	0.91 miles to St. Joseph corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	96%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	93%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.51 to 0.75 miles	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
				76
				Total LESA Score

TS 13	1	size of subject site	75.8 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	2.28 miles to Pesotum corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	95% assumed	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	assume more than 1 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
				100
				Total LESA Score

TS 14	1	size of subject site	20 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	3 miles to Ivesdale corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	99.7%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	assume more than 1 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
				97
				Total LESA Score

Attachment D
FIELD TEST SITE RESULTS

TS 16	1	size of subject site	40 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	1.2 miles to Champaign corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	97%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.76 to 1 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				100

TS 17	1	size of subject site	16.5 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use	100%	
	4	1.9 miles to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?	no	
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile	100%	
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile	90%	
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings	0.26 to 0.50 mile	
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility	none known within 1 mile	
	11	nearest public assembly use	assume more than 1 mile	
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				97

RRO Test Site

A	1	size of subject site	40 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use		
	4	1.9 miles to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?		
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile		
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile		
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings		
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility		
	11	nearest public assembly use		
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				76

RRO Test Site

B	1	size of subject site	21.77 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use		
	4	1.9 miles to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?		
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile		
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile		
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings		
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility		
	11	nearest public assembly use		
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				87

RRO Test Site

C	1	size of subject site	51.2 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use		
	4	1.9 miles to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?		
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile		
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile		
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings		
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility		
	11	nearest public assembly use		
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				86

RRO Test Site

D	1	size of subject site	20.93 acres	
	2	is subject site best prime farmland?	assume BPF has LE of 91 or above	
	3	% of perimeter adjacent to ag land use		
	4	1.9 miles to Urbana corporate limits		
	5	within CUGA ?		
	6	% of site in ag land use		
	7	% of land zoned AG-1, AG-2 and/or CR within 1 mile		
	8	% of area in ag land use within 1 mile		
	9	nearest 10 non-farm dwellings		
	10	proximity of known livestock mgmt facility		
	11	nearest public assembly use		
				SA
				LE
Total LESA Score				91

Proposed Revisions to Draft LESA Update and Best Prime Farmland Definition

1. SA Factor #2 could be revised to award the full 30 points only to sites that are very large, as follows:

- 2.A. Is the subject site Best Prime Farmland? (Yes 20 points/ No 0 points)
- 2.B. If the subject site is Best Prime Farmland, which of the following statements is correct:
- (1) The subject site is no more than 15% of a larger real estate tax parcel (or multiple parcels) that existed on January 1, 2004? (Yes 0 points)
 - (2) The subject site is larger than 15% of a larger real estate tax parcel (or multiple parcels) that existed on January 1, 2004? (Yes 10 points)
 - (3) The subject site was not part of a larger tax parcel or parcels on January 1, 2004, and is not larger than 25 acres. (Yes 0 points)
 - (4) The subject site was not part of a larger tax parcel or parcels on January 1, 2004, and is larger than 25 acres. (Yes 10 points)

Note: This would reduce the points for best prime farmland sites provided that the amount of best prime farmland proposed for development is under the limit of 25 acres or 15% of the parent tract. It is difficult to generalize what effect this would have on the test sites but using the current BPF= 85 it would cut 10 points off of the 4 sites that are under 25 acres and the reality is that most RROs on larger tracts would also be within the 15% limit and thus this could reduce most scores by 10 points.

2. Add a new SA Factor number 3 (and renumber) as follows:

3. If the subject site is not Best Prime Farmland but is Prime Farmland, is it larger than 25 acres? (Yes 10 points/ No 0 points)

Note: It is difficult to generalize what effect this would have on the test sites but if BPF= 92 it would add 10 points to TS10.

3. Revise points for SA Factor 7 (% land zoned rural) to 10 and increase points for SA Factor 9 (distance to 10 nonfarm dwellings) to 20

Note: 10 of the 11 sites had 100% of land w/in 1 mile zoned rural (AG1, AG2, or CR) but only two of the sites (10 & 13, using my ratings) had no nonfarm dwellings w/in 1 mile and that makes those locations very valuable for agriculture. For most of the test sites this change would reduce the total LESA score by about 6 points but the scores for 10 & 13 would not change on this factor.

4. The definition of “best prime farmland” could be revised as follows:

“Best” prime farmland is prime farmland soils that under optimum management have soil productivities that range from X% to 100% of the highest soil productivities in Champaign County, as reported in Bulletin 811, and which may consist of any of the following:

- (1) soils identified as Agriculture Value Groups *Y* in the Champaign County LESA System; or
- (2) some combination of best prime farmland soils and other soils that in combination have an average overall LE of *X* or higher, as determined using the methods in the LESA System; and
- (3) any combination of soils in which Agriculture Value Groups 1 or 2 in the Champaign County LESA System make up 30% or more of the subject site.

Note: I have had a concern for sometime about combinations of Drummer & Flanagan with poorer soil groups that end up not being BPF on average and the third part of the definition of best prime farmland will ensure that such sites are not averaged out of being. (I wonder if this was also the point of Mr. Stierwalt's concerns about soil combinations.)

The current BPF= 85 results in a mix of 30% AVG#1 and 70% AVG#5 averaging 85 or BPF and thus a 30/70 mix with of AVG#1 and AVGs 6,7,or 8 would not average BPF.

Minutes as Amended and Approved



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4 **Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Update Committee**

5
6 **DATE:** Wednesday, January 4, 2012
7 **TIME:** 6:30 p.m.
8 **PLACE:** Brookens Administrative Center
9 John Dimit Conference Room
10 1776 E. Washington St.
11 Urbana, Illinois
12

13 **Voting Members Present:** Kevin Donoho, Debra Griest, Liz Jones, Kyle Krapf, Patsi Petrie, Bruce Stickers

14 **Voting Members Absent:** Steve Moser, Steve Stierwalt

15 **Non-Voting Member Present:** John Hall

16
17 **Others Present:** Hal Barnhart, Norman Stenzel, Andrew Kass
18

19 **CCRPC Facilitator:** Susan Monte
20
21
22

23
24 Minutes as Amended and Approved

25
26 Call to Order and Roll Call

27
28 Griest called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. Donoho, Griest, Krapf, Petrie, Stickers, and Hall were present
29 at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.
30

31 Approval of Agenda

32
33 **Motion by Petrie to approve the agenda; seconded by Krapf. Motion carried with unanimous support.**
34

35 Public Participation

36
37 Hal Barnhart, 469 CR 1500 N, Champaign, expressed concern that an LE of 100, overall, would result in less
38 protection of farmland, and that the LESA update draft does not sufficiently address a phenomenon
39 described as 'creeping effect' in the LESA Guidebook. Barnhart suggested possible inclusion of a site
40 assessment factor that assesses the entire parent tract with regard to best prime farmland and not just the
41 subject site portion of a parent tract. Barnhart distributed a handout
42

43 Norman Stenzel, 545A CR 1900 N, Champaign, expressed concern that the draft LESA update continues to be
44 flawed, and urged the Committee: to protect Prime Farmland as provided in federal legislation associated
45 with farmland protection and not just Best Prime Farmland; to expand the LESA update to address the
46 creeping effect; to include an assessment of the reasons for a proposed conversion in the update; and to

Minutes as Amended and Approved

1 eliminate nominal information which should not be a part of the LESA system. Stenzel submitted written
2 comments.

3
4 Jones entered the meeting at approximately 6:55 p.m.

5 6 Approval of Minutes

7
8 **Motion** by Petrie to approve the minutes of November 29, 2011; seconded by Donoho. Hall noted the correction
9 needed to the word 'conscious' to 'conscience' on page 1. Members agreed that line 22 on page 4 should be
10 changed to reflect the motion as seconded by Krapf. **Motion to approve the minutes, as modified, carried with**
11 **unanimous support.**

12
13 Griest stated that it is her expectation that all handouts received at the meeting are an integral published part of
14 the official minutes.

15
16 **Motion** by Donoho to approve the minutes of December 14, 2011; seconded by Stickers Hall noted a correction
17 to line 36 on page 2 to add 'land identified as' and a correction to line 38 on page 2 to add 'some'. Hall noted a
18 correction to line 32 on page 3 to remove the first use of the word 'the.' **Motion to approve the minutes, as**
19 **modified, carried with unanimous support.**

20 21 Best Prime Farmland Definition Recommendation

22
23 Monte reviewed recommendation that Best Prime Farmland be based on an LE = 100 and with a percentage of a
24 subject sites having a certain percentage of LE = 100 as also being considered as Best Prime Farmland, noting that
25 an alternate LE could instead be proposed, if the Committee desired, in the format provided.

26
27 Petrie proposed the Committee consider eliminating the LE component of the county LESA, and that scoring be
28 limited to site assessment factors only.

29
30 Stickers doubted the USDA NRCS State Conservationist would approve the county's update of a LESA without
31 both sides of the LESA equation. Stickers indicated the draft update to the LE portion of LESA appears to be
32 nearly complete at this point, and that, at present, SA factors adjustments and a recommendation regarding a
33 definition for best prime farmland continue to be considered. Monte noted Terry Savko had advised not
34 adjusting the relative proportion scored points of the LE and SA portions. Griest believed the LE had to be
35 included.

36
37 Petrie proposed the LE value be retained at a level 100 for all sites. Griest could not support such a premise that
38 all land is equal. Donoho noted that the poorest soils are also the smallest in numbers of acres in the county.
39 Donoho advised it would not be wise to lump the poor soils together with the high quality soils and ignore their
40 differences, since the point of the LE is to note the differences that do exist and that the reason for having
41 different designations of soils and different groups has merit because there are a lot of variations among the soils
42 in this County.

43
44 Petrie suggested the proposal to remove the LE be considered from the aspect of development and not from the
45 aspect of farming. Jones noted the LE was important in highlighting the poorer soils, which in turn is useful in
46 guiding zoning decisions by the County towards preserving the high quality farmgrounds.

47
48 Petrie indicated that she does not prefer the proposed Best Prime Farmland definition recommendations
49 because she has a hard time accepting the amount of acreage that would go unprotected and that the proposed
50 definition would open up the creeping aspect. Griest understands that 'at risk' does not mean 'unprotected',

Minutes as Amended and Approved

1 that it means just not as well protected, and that a non-Best Prime Farmland designation would not be
2 equivalent to a carte blanche that all 'x' number of acres in the 'at risk ' category be developed.

3
4 Hall indicated that the maps provided of Agriculture Value Group LE values do not visually indicate, at the scale
5 shown, the amount of interspersed soils of Best Prime Farmland and non-Best Prime Farmland.

6
7 Donoho requested further explanation of Attachment B. Members discussed the interpretation of Attachment B.

8
9 Petrie expressed her concern that a Best Prime Farmland definition based on a higher LE would open the door to
10 non-compact and non-contiguous, scattered development. Members considered that areas of poorer soils are
11 interspersed within areas of higher quality soils, but that areas of poorer soils are also largely contiguous to
12 themselves as illustrated on the maps provided.

13
14 Referring to the *County Subdivision Ordinance 'Minimum Subdivision Standard'* that requires to minimize as
15 much as possible the amount of farmland with a LE of 85 or greater on a proposed new by right lot, Hall indicated
16 that, if a plat act exemption is not available, a landowner will often choose to not proceed to request a plat of
17 subdivision because that process is expensive and often results in a denial at the County Board. Hall indicated this
18 problem would be lessened if the proposed Best Prime Farmland definition were adjusted to be based on an LE
19 equal to 100, and if a certain proportion (e.g., 20%) of any subject site having the soils in Agriculture Value
20 Groups 1 or 2 (LE of 100) were also considered Best Prime Farmland.

21
22 Members discussed the County zoning limits on by right development and the impact of LESA on by right limits.

23
24 Griest expressed support for the idea that Best Prime Farmland be defined based on an LE equal to 100 (with
25 soils in Agriculture Value Groups 1 or 2) or if a site has more than a small percentage of Ag Value Groups 1 or 2,
26 then that site is designated as Best Prime Farmland. Griest acknowledged that some tweaks may have to be
27 made to this definition over the next 10 years or so, however she believes this Best Prime Farmland definition
28 would serve to protect the richest, most productive ground.

29
30 Griest reminded Committee members that an 85 under the existing LESA is not an 85 under the new scoring
31 dynamic because of the other factors and the weight given to points.

32 SA Factors

33
34 Monte reviewed the recent removal of SA Factor 11 and the reassigning of the 10 points from that factor to SA
35 Factor 2b. Hall indicated that he had attempted an analysis of whether an alternate re-allocation of the 10 points
36 would be preferable, and that he had found no compelling evidence to suggest an alternative to the proposed
37 reassignment of 10 points to SA Factor 2b.

38
39 Petrie expressed concerns regarding some of the SA Factors in general, referencing an email she had distributed
40 earlier in the day. Petrie indicated a need to consider how the SA Factors relate to the County Zoning Ordinance.
41 Petrie questioned whether non-farm dwellings are counted differently or twice with regard to unincorporated
42 and incorporated areas. Krapf questioned how a non-farm dwelling is defined, and Hall responded and also
43 mentioned that evidence that a farmer may occupy a dwelling occasionally is provided during a public hearing.

44
45 Monte reviewed the staff recommendation to shift the location of SA Factor 4 so that SA Factor 4 is evaluated
46 after the CUGA cut off.

47 LESA Score Ratings for Protection

48
49 Monte reviewed an option of adjusting the Ratings for Protection to allow for increased differentiation in ratings
50 for total LESA scores.
51

Minutes as Amended and Approved

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Next Meeting Date

Members agreed to hold the next Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. and that the January 25, 2012 meeting should be expected to last two hours.

Adjournment

Griest adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Monte, LESA Update Committee Facilitator



Date: December 29, 2011
To: LESA Update Committee
From: Susan Monte, Committee Facilitator
Regarding: Meeting 12 on Wednesday January 4, 2012

Recommendation for a Proposed BPF Definition

The Committee requested a proposed definition of Best Prime Farmland (BPF) and clarification of previously distributed Attachment E (Comparison of Different BPF Definitions), with data regarding an average LE of 90 and 92.¹

Attachment B compares different BPF definitions, and includes estimates of the amount of LE = 100 soils that would not be protected under each definition. The database consists of analyses, at an aggregate countywide level, of amounts of LE = 100 soils, and total amounts of one other non-BPF Agriculture Value Group. This database allows for rough estimates of amounts of LE = 100 soils potentially 'at risk' of not being protected, compared across various BPF definitions. Attachment A is a summary of the data provided in Attachment B.

Proposed Definition with Options Provided below is a proposed BPF definition based on an LE = 100 approach and including sites consisting of a minimum percentage of LE = 100 soils. A total of 61.7% of County land would consist of BPF with an LE = 100. Based on available estimates (see Attachments A and B), the amount of LE = 100 soils that could be at risk of not being protected under the proposed BPF definition below would range from 66,945 to 91,879 acres.

"Best Prime Farmland is prime farmland soils that under optimum management have the highest soil productivities in Champaign County, as reported in *Bulletin 811 Optimum Crop Productivity Ratings for Illinois Soils*. Best Prime Farmland consists of soils in Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 in the *Champaign County Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System*, or any development site that includes significant amounts (___% or more of the area proposed to be developed) of Agriculture Value Groups 1 and 2 soils."

Option A: significant amount of AVG 1 & 2 soils = 22% or more of area proposed to be developed

Option A represents an equivalent amount of Agriculture Value Group 1 (AVG 1) soils at risk under the existing approach (66,945 acres or 17% of AVG 1 soils).

In terms of AVG 1 & 2 soils at risk, Option A would be closest to an average LE threshold of 88, for which an estimated 60,801 acres of AVG 1 & 2 soils would be at risk.

Option B: significant amount of AVG 1 & 2 soils = 25% or more of area proposed to be developed

Option B represents a slight increase (79,034 acres or 20.5% of AVG 1 & 2 soils at risk) and could result in an additional loss of 3.5% of AVG 1 soils under the existing approach, but the justification would be that 25% is a number that is easy to remember.

Option C: significant amount of AVG 1 & 2 soils = 28% or more of area proposed to be developed

Option C represents an even greater increase (91,879 acres or 23.3% of AVG 1 & 2 soils at risk)

Option C: (continued)

with the justification that this approximates an average LE threshold of 88 and 91, which is close to the average LE threshold 90 and 92 previously considered by the Committee. The benefit of this approach is that it is a higher threshold and would be less restrictive to a landowner, but it could result in an additional loss of 6.3% (24,934 acres) of AVG 1 & 2 soils, as compared to Option A.

SA Factor Points Distribution

Re-allocating 10 points from Former SA Factor 11. At the December 14 meeting, the Committee agreed to remove draft SA Factor 11 and award the 10 points to SA Factor 2a, so that SA Factor 2a now has a total of 30 points. Following the meeting, John Hall expressed concern that raising the SA Factor 2a points by 10 would raise the total LESA scores to score of 269 or higher for several of the test sites having an $LE \geq 94$ (TS1, TS7, TS13, TS14, TS16, TS17). Test sites 40 acres or larger (TS1, TS7, TS13, TS16) would have total LESA scores between 274 and 296.

To allow for Committee review of this concern, staff is preparing field test data regarding LE scores for the 15 total test sites (11 original test sites plus the 4 RRO test sites) in order to illustrate the effect of the change. At the January 4 meeting, staff may recommend splitting the points from former SA Factor 11 to 5 additional points for SA Factor 2a and 5 additional points for SA Factor 2b.

Maximum possible points for sites in CUGA increases to 185. The re-allocation of points from former SA Factor 11 to SA Factor 2 increases the maximum possible points for sites in the CUGA to 185, which exceeds the threshold of 179 points for moderate protection. The previous maximum was 175. Alternatives for coping with this include:

- a) No action
- b) Increase the threshold to 185.
- c) Relocate proposed SA Factor 4 so that it is evaluated after the CUGA cut off.
- d) Simply move proposed SA Factor 5 regarding CUGA to be the first SA Factor.

Staff will recommend Alternative c) above. An Alternative Draft LESA Update containing this recommended change is provided for Committee review.

SA Factor Adjustment

The Draft LESA Update revised 12/29/11 defines "agriculture" and "agricultural land use" and includes SA Factors 3, 6, and 8 that assess "agricultural land use."

John Hall is in the process of testing a possible proposed adjustment to SA Factor 6 (the highest percentage of the subject site in agricultural land use in any of the last 5 years) which he may recommend at the January 4 meeting. The adjustment would result in woodlands continuing to be considered as "agricultural land use" in assessing how much land is in agricultural land use (for SA Factors 3 and 8), but that woodlands would not be considered as "agricultural production" in SA Factor 6 unless the landowner has a plan for harvesting or unless the woodlands are in a CRP or similar program. The adjustment under consideration would require a defined term for 'agriculture production' that would be specific to SA Factor 6.

Meeting 12 LESA Update Committee

LESA Score Ratings for Protection

The strikeout version of Draft LESA Update revised 12/14/2011 contained the following ratings for protection:

260 – 300	very high rating for protection	40 points total
220 – 259	high rating for protection	40 points total
180 – 219	moderate rating for protection	40 points total
179 or below	low rating for protection	

Staff recommends that the 10 points from SA Factor 11 be split to 5 points for all best prime farmland (Draft SA Factor 2) and 5 points for the CUGA (Draft SA Factor 5), then the maximum points possible for sites within the CUGA will be reduced to 180 which is one more point than the maximum of 179 points for ‘low rating for protection.’ Correcting for this, the following is proposed as an improved rating classification structure:

261 – 300	very high rating for protection	40 points total
221 – 260	high rating for protection	40 points total
181 – 220	moderate rating for protection	40 points total
180 or below	low rating for protection	

To additionally correct for a somewhat disproportionate ‘moderate’ range of only 40 points and the combined ‘high’ and ‘very high’ range of 80 points, the following rating classification structure is proposed:

271 – 300	very high rating for protection	60 points total (very high and high)
241 – 270	high rating for protection	
181 – 240	moderate rating for protection	60 points total
180 or below	low rating for protection	

Staff suggests the Committee consider the option provided above, which would allow for increased differentiation in ratings for total LESA scores, which appear to be trending much higher generally.

Attachments

- A Best Prime Farmland Data Summary
- B Comparison of ‘At Risk Amounts’ of LE = 100 Soil under Different BPF Definitions
- C Memorandum from John Hall dated 12/28/2011

Footnote 1.

As a point of clarification, a Land Evaluation (LE) value refers to the average LE shown for an Agriculture Value Group (AVG) as indicated in Table 1 of the Draft LESA. Individual soil series have an individual Adjusted Productivity Index (API) value. The API for each soil series is one of three classification systems used to arrive at the average LE value for an AVG. ‘API’ should not be used interchangeably with ‘LE’.

Champaign
County
Department of

**PLANNING &
ZONING**

Brookens
Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington Street
Urbana, Illinois 61802

(217) 384-3708

To: **Champaign County LESA Update Committee**

From: **John Hall, Director & Zoning Administrator**

Date: **January 4, 2011**

RE: **Miscellaneous**

AN APPROACH TO EXCLUDING WOODLANDS FROM SA FACTOR 6

Proposed SA Factor 6 asks for "The highest percentage of the subject site in agricultural land use in any of the last 5 years." The Committee had previously considered excluding woodlands as an "agricultural" land use for the purpose of this factor but at the November 29, 2011, meeting decided that the text it was using was not logical and decided to stop excluding woodlands from this factor.

There is an approach that will logically exclude unharvested woodlands for the purpose of SA Factor 6 while still considering the same to be an agricultural land use but that approach requires distinguishing between areas used for "agricultural production" versus non-productive agricultural land use. Attachment A outlines such an approach and reviews the effect on SA scores for the Round Two test sites.

PERCENT AVG 1&2 SOILS FOR RRO CASES AND OTHER REZONINGS

Attachment B summarizes RRO cases and other recent rezoning and compares the percent of each site that was Agriculture Value Groups 1 & 2. The comparison can be summarized as follows:

- Most sites of RRO rezoning either contain no soils in AVG1 or AVG2 or contain more than 30% AVG1&2 soils.
- Three RRO sites contained some amount of AVG 1&2 soils but did not have an average LE of 85 or greater. The "parent tract" in Case 520-AM-05 contained 19% AVG2 but had an average LE of only 84.
- A pending rezoning case at the ZBA is on soil that is 23.3% AVG2 and still has an average LE of 84.

PERCENT AVG 1&2 SOILS FOR TEST SITES

Attachment C reviews the percent AVG1&2 soils on each test site.

CURRENT TEST SITE RATINGS

Attachment D summarizes the scoring changes made so far and the current scores on all test sites.

ATTACHMENT

- A An Approach to Defining Non-production Agricultural Land Use for Use in the Draft LESA Update**
- B Champaign County RRO Cases And Recent Rezoning Cases Percent Agriculture Value Group 1 & 2 Soils**
- C Percent Agriculture Value Group 1 & 2 Soils on Test Sites**
- D Summary of Draft SA Scoring Changes and Current Draft LESA Scores**

**ATTACHMENT A: AN APPROACH TO DEFINING NON-PRODUCTION
AGRICULTURAL LAND USE FOR USE IN THE DRAFT LESA UPDATE**

Woodlands (and other areas) that are not being harvested or used to produce income can be considered as non-productive agricultural land use for the purpose of proposed SA Factor 6 provided that adequate care is taken in defining what should be considered as a productive agricultural land use.

“Agricultural production” could be defined as the following:

The growing, harvesting, and storing of crops and the keeping, raising, and feeding of livestock or poultry and the buildings and land used in those activities including any dwelling occupied by a farmer or farm operator or tenants and land that has been taken out of production for purposes of government sponsored agricultural programs. This definition is not intended to include land that is not being used productively such as woodlands for which there is no plan for harvesting the timber or land that has buildings that were formerly but are no longer used in such activities.

Proposed SA Factor 6 could then be revised to ask for the following:

The highest percentage of the subject site in agricultural ~~land use~~ production in any of the last 5 years.

If these changes were made to the Proposed Draft LESA and the Round Two test sites scores on SA Factor 6 were revisited, the following results would be obtained:

Test Site	SA Factor 6 Highest Percent of Site in Agricultural Production in any of the last 5 years	Change in scoring of SA Factor 6 from 11/29/11	Revised SA	Revised LESA	Notes
1	100%	NC			
2	100%	NC			CUGA site
4	100%	NC			CUGA site
7	100%	NC			
8	0%	Subtract 15 points	119	207 (12/2/11)	LE=88
10	100%	NC			
11	46%	Subtract 8 points	128	204 (12/2/11)	LE=76
13	100%	NC			
14	100%	NC			
16	100%	NC			
17	100%	NC			

**Attachment B. Champaign County RRO Cases And Recent Rezoning Cases Percent
Agriculture Value Group 1 & 2 Soils Draft January 4, 2012**

Case Number (Applicant)	Section & Township Location	Area (number of lots)	LE score (%AVG 1&2)	Total LESA Score	Status
221-AM-00 (Bell et. Al.)	25/Scott	40 acres (26 lots)	98 (92.5% AVG 1&2)	248-256	WITHDRAWN
247-AM-00 (Atkins)	27/St. Joseph	51.2 acres (22 lots)	86 (43.0% AVG 1&2)	215-222	WITHDRAWN
253-AM-00 (Neef)	25/Newcomb	17.8 acres (5 lots)	68 (0% AVG 1&2)	183-199	APPROVED
343-AM-03 (Widholm)	12/Tolono	20.9 acres (4 lots)	95 (36% AVG 1&2)	193-202	APPROVED
398-AM-03 (Brock)	25/Newcomb	21.8 acres (10 lots)	87 (34% AVG 1&2)	211	APPROVED
*445-AM-04 (Hunt)	35/Stanton	76.0 acres (48 lots)	97 (87.8% AVG 1&2)	247-251	DENIED
459-AM-04 (Woodard)	36/Newcomb	40.0 acres (10 lots)	76 (0% AVG 1&2)	208-212	APPROVED
‡ 468-AM-04 (Knox)	21/East Bend	10.5 acres (6 lots)	85 (0% AVG 1&2)	180-200	APPROVED
514-AM-05 (Hooser)	25/Stanton	4.7 acres (1 lot)	77 (14.7% AVG 2)	209	DENIED
520-AM-05 (Bateman)	29/Newcomb	12 acres (3 lots)	84 (19% AVG 2)	220-226	APPROVED
542-AM-06 (Wozniak)	22/Newcomb	81.6 acres (27 lots)	83 (1.3% AVG 2)	203- 213	WITHDRAWN
545-AM-06 (Lo)	22/Somer	29.9 acres (16 lots)	95 (71.0% AVG 1&2)	241-251	WITHDRAWN
546-AM-06 (Insana)	35/Somer	29.9 acres (9 lots)	67 (0% AVG 1&2)	173-183	APPROVED
573-AM-06 (Cope)	32/Somer	19.0 acres (3 lots)	76 (0% AVG 1&2)	176- 186	APPROVED
689 &690-AM- 11 (Sollers & Shadwick)	27/Crittenden	16.7 acres (2 lots)	76 (4.2%)	208	APPROVED

OTHER RECENT REZONING CASES

687-AM-11 (Jones)	27/Crittenden	12.9 acres (one lot)	84 (23.3%)	216	PENDING
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Notes

*revised before final determination

**not all one lot RROs are listed above

Shaded cells indicate rezoning where AVG 1&2 were present but the LE averaged less than 85

‡ No AVG 1&2 but LE averaged 85 so was considered best prime farmland

**Attachment C. Percent Agriculture Value Group 1 & 2 Soils on
Test Sites**

January 4, 2012

TS1	LE = 95	AVG 1 and 2 (71.9 % of 40 acres)
TS2	LE = 87	AVG 1 and 2 (13.5 % of 14.77 acres)
TS4	LE= 100	AVG 1 and 2 (93.6 % of 80 acres)
TS7	LE = 93	AVG 1 and 2 (46.1 % of 79.5 acres)
TS8	LE = 88	AVG 1 and 2 (19.9 % of 15.25 acres)
TS10	LE = 91	AVG 1 and 2 (31.4 % of 160 acres)
TS11	LE = 76	AVG 1 and 2 (11.6 % of 23.04 acres)
TS13	LE = 100	AVG 1 and 2 (100 % of 75.8 acres)
TS14	LE = 97	AVG 1 and 2 (65 % of 20 acres)
TS16	LE = 100	AVG 1 and 2 (100 % of 40 acres)
TS17	LE = 97	AVG 1 and 2 (52.1 % of 16.5 acres)
RRO TSA	LE = 81	AVG 1 and 2 (0 % of 40 acres)
RRO TSB	LE = 89	AVG 1 and 2 (33.9 % of 21.8 acres)
RRO TSC	LE = 89	AVG 1 and 2 (43.8 % of 51.2 acres)
RRO TSD	LE = 96	AVG 1 and 2 (35 % of 20.25 acres)

Approved Minutes



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MINUTES AS APPROVED

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Update Committee

DATE: Wednesday, January 25, 2012
TIME: 6:34 p.m.
PLACE: Brookens Administrative Center
John Dimit Conference Room
1776 E. Washington St.
Urbana, Illinois

Voting Members Present: Kevin Donoho, Debra Griest, Liz Jones, Kyle Krapf, Pattsy Petrie, Bruce Stickers

Voting Members Absent: Steve Moser, Steve Stierwalt

Non-Voting Member Present: John Hall

Others Present: Hal Barnhart, Norman Stenzel, Andrew Kass

CCRPC Facilitator: Susan Monte

Call to Order and Roll Call

Griest called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Donoho, Griest, Jones, Petrie, Stickers, and Hall were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Donoho to approve the agenda; seconded by Jones. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**

Krapf entered the meeting at approximately 6:36 p.m.

Public Participation

Norman Stenzel, 545A CR 1900 N, Champaign, expressed concerns regarding the reliability and validity of the draft LESA update as an instrument and about the County policy regarding Best Prime Farmland. Stenzel provided a critique of the proposed SA Factors. Stenzel submitted a written haiku regarding preserving farmland.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Donoho to approve the minutes of January 4, 2012; seconded by Petrie. Donoho noted an adjustment to Line 41, Page 2 regarding use of the word 'proposed.' Jones advised to replace the word with 'suggested'. Hall noted the correction to add 'Andrew Kass' as an attendee. Hall noted that members had

Approved Minutes

1 agreed to expect that the January 25th meeting would be extended to a two-hour meeting, and he requested
2 that be added. **Motion to approve the minutes, as modified, carried with unanimous support.**

3 4 LESA Update Approval Procedure

5
6 Monte reviewed the LESA update procedure based on the current available information. Hall indicated that
7 Assistant State's Attorney Joel Fletcher recommends that the County Board receive and consider the LESA
8 Update Committee recommendation and then presumably vote on what it wants to send to a public hearing.
9 Following the public hearing, the County Board would consider the input from the public hearing and then vote
10 on a final version.

11 12 LESA Update Draft

13
14 Monte reviewed the proposed adjustment to SA Factor 2 since completion of field testing in December, as shown
15 in the Draft LESA Update revised January 18, 2012.

16
17 Monte reviewed the proposed changes to SA Factors 3 and 8 since completion of field testing in December, as
18 shown in the Draft LESA Update revised January 18, 2012. Monte reviewed the procedure for scoring SA Factors
19 3 and 8. Hall requested that a reference to the *Champaign County Zoning Ordinance* be added to the narrative
20 for SA Factors 3 and 8 which are now proposed to refer to 'principal use.' Hall noted that 'non-conforming land
21 use' should be added to the list of exceptions indicated in the scoring procedure for scoring SA Factors 3 and 8.

22
23 Monte reviewed the proposed adjustment to SA Factor 6, since completion of field testing in December, as
24 shown in the Draft LESA Update revised January 18, 2012. Donoho requested that the reference to 'harvest' in
25 the defined term for 'agricultural production' be changed to 'manage' instead, to more accurately reflect the
26 plan options for wooded or timbered lands.

27
28 Griest indicated that the Committee expectation is that a final draft of the LESA Update will be distributed to the
29 Committee prior to the next Committee meeting.

30 31 LESA Score Ratings for Protection

32
33 Griest requested that the staff Handout dated January 25, 2012 regarding 'LESA Protection Ratings' be reviewed
34 by Committee members outside the meeting, and that the Handout be considered at the next meeting.

35 36 Best Prime Farmland Definition Recommendation

37
38 Members discussed the Attachment B data distributed at the January 4th meeting, the 'Comparison of "At Risk
39 Amounts" of LE = 100 Soil under Different BPF Definitions,' and focused on understanding the data provided
40 regarding "acres of LE = 100 soils that could be lost in combination with non-Best Prime Farmland."

41
42 **Motion by Donoho to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes, seconded by Krapf. Motion carried with
43 unanimous support.**

44
45 Monte indicated that the 15 test site LESA Update scores based on the final draft LESA Update would be available
46 at the next meeting, and that the test sites could be applied to assumed BPF definition options for comparison.

47
48 Members selected various BPF definition options to consider at the next meeting, including:
49 LE score = 100, all AVG 1 or 2 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of x % of AVG 1 or 2 soils;

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1 LE score \geq 94, all AVG 1, 2 or 3 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of x % of AVG 1, 2, or 3 soils;
2 and LE score \geq 91, all AVG 1, 2, 3, or 4 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of x % of AVG 1, 2, 3, or 4
3 soils.

4

5 **Motion** by Donoho to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes, seconded by Krapf. **Motion carried with**
6 **unanimous support.**

7

8 Next Meeting Date

9

10 Monte indicated that, as possible, the next meeting should be considered as the final Committee meeting.
11 Members agreed to a next Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at 6:30 p.m., and will expect
12 that meeting to be a two-hour meeting if necessary.

13

14 Adjournment

15

16 Griest adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

17

18 Respectfully submitted,

19

20 Susan Monte, LESA Update Committee Facilitator

21



DATE:	January 18, 2012
TO:	LESA Update Committee
FROM:	Susan Monte
RE:	January 25 Agenda Items

LESA Update Procedure

Aspects of the LESA Update approval procedure were recently questioned. Attachment A contains a review of the approval procedure, based on the most currently available information.

Remaining LESA Update Draft Items

Since the rounds of field testing completed in December, significant proposed changes to the remaining SA Factors have included:

- o SA Factor 2 expanded to include consideration of subject site lot size and parcel configuration as of January 1, 2004, and subject site Prime Farmland status and lot size.
- o SA Factor 3 scoring adjusted to be based on general guidelines for estimating agricultural land use, with these guidelines included in the 'agricultural land use' defined term.
- o SA Factor 6 modified to be based on a definition of 'agricultural production' that allows woodlands on a subject site to be considered as agricultural production if there is a plan for harvesting the timber.
- o SA Factor 8 scoring adjusted to be based general guidelines for estimating agricultural land use, with these guidelines included in the 'agricultural land use' defined term.

The Alternate Draft dated 01/18/2012, provided as Attachment B, contains the above proposed changes in red text.

At present, staff is testing the 15 test sites to determine whether consistent responses can be achieved with the application of the SA Factors as proposed in the Alternate Draft dated 01/18/2012. I expect the testing results to be available at or prior to the January 25th meeting.

A staff recommendation regarding potential final adjustments to the proposed LESA Ratings for Protection will be available at or prior to the January 25 meeting, and reviewed at the January 25 meeting.

Best Prime Farmland Definition Recommendation

No additional information regarding a BPF definition recommendation is provided in this packet.

Attachments

- A Review of LESA Update Approval Procedure
- B LESA Draft Alternate dated 01/18/2012

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1
2
3
4 Minutes as Approved

5 ***Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Update Committee***
6

7 **DATE:** Wednesday, February 22, 2012
8 **TIME:** 6:31 p.m.
9 **PLACE:** Brookens Administrative Center
10 John Dimit Conference Room
11 1776 E. Washington St.
12 Urbana, Illinois
13

14 ***Voting Members Present:*** Kevin Donoho, Debra Griest, Liz Jones, Kyle Krapf, Pattsy Petrie, Bruce Stickers,
15 Steve Stierwalt
16

17 ***Voting Members Absent:*** Steve Moser
18

19 ***Non-Voting Member Present:*** John Hall
20

21 ***Others Present:*** Hal Barnhart, Norman Stenzel, Andrew Kass, Gary Maxwell
22

23 ***CCRPC Facilitator:*** Susan Monte
24

25
26 Call to Order and Roll Call
27

28 Griest called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Donoho, Griest, Jones, Krapf, Petrie, Stickers, Stierwalt, and
29 Hall were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.
30

31 Approval of Agenda
32

33 **Motion** by Krapf to approve the agenda; seconded by Donoho. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**
34

35 Public Participation
36

37 Norman Stenzel, 545A CR 1900 N, Champaign, shared his understanding of farmland preservation and
38 farmland conversion in Champaign County, citing statistics supporting the need for food production globally.
39 Stenzel requested the Committee not end its development of the LESA site assessment factors, and to test
40 the LESA instrument during a trial period.
41

42 Hal Barnhart urged the Committee to consider the impact that the Best Prime Farmland (BPF) definition will
43 have beyond its use in the County's LESA system. Barnhart shared his belief that the impact of the BPF
44 designation is greatest for by right development and for discretionary review.
45
46

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Approval of Minutes

Motion by Petrie to approve the minutes of January 25, 2012; seconded by Krapf. Motion to approve the minutes carried with unanimous support.

Final Proposed Adjustments to SA Factors

Monte reviewed final proposed adjustments to SA Factor 2(C).

Petrie requested the wording of SA Factor 2(C)(2) be made easier to understand. Donoho asked how SA Factor 2C(2) would apply if two rezoning requests on the same larger parcel were made concurrently. Hall indicated that technically one rezoning request would occur at a separate point in time then the other, and that details about each would be available for both requests.

Griest asked members for their input regarding retaining Factor 2(C) and the consensus of members was that it should be retained and, if possible, simplified by staff, with the proposed adjustment shared with members. Members discussed expanding the narrative for Factor 2(C) and Hall suggested text for an expansion.

Monte reviewed final proposed adjustments to SA Factor 3.

Petrie requested that: a definition for 'principal use' be added; that 'accessory uses' of agriculture also be considered in the SA Factors that currently consider only 'principal use' of agriculture; and that the definition of 'agriculture' be expanded to include 'entities that service and support agriculture' such as grain elevators or seed companies.

Hall clarified that not all entities that service and support agriculture are exempt from zoning, with some (e.g. grain elevators) requiring a special use permit. Hall indicated he does not believe it is necessary to consider entities that service and support agriculture in the LESA and that any modification like this would add to the time it takes to complete a LESA for a subject site. Hall advised that in this regard, 'the best or the better is the enemy of the good.' Griest observed that with regard to SA Factor 3, any impact of ancillary activities to agriculture might be a point or two, but not significant.

Hall clarified that the Zoning Ordinance does not include a definition of 'principal use' and that including this definition in the LESA is not necessary in his opinion. Members discussed the merit of adding 'principal use' as a defined term in the LESA.

Krapf questioned the defined term for 'farm dwelling' on page 10, which led to members comparing the definition of 'non-farm dwelling.' Hall pointed out that the definition of 'non-farm dwelling' in Appendix B works well. Stickers observed that presently, one needs to review both the definition for 'non-farm dwelling' and 'farm dwelling' in order to make sense of either one. Hall advised that the definitions for 'farm dwelling' and 'non-farm dwelling' need to be absolutely coordinated and, at the same time, able to be understood individually. Griest directed staff to fix the definitions of 'farm dwelling' and 'non-farm dwelling.'

Petrie pointed out the instances of 'row' used to modify 'crops' in the guidelines for SA Factor 6, and requested 'row' be removed as a modifier. Others agreed that 'cropland' would be the better word to retain. Griest directed staff to remove 'row' as a modifier of 'crop' from the Factor 6 guidelines.

Monte reviewed final proposed adjustments to SA Factor 8.

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1 Petrie questioned the 2011 line in the sand established for SA Factor 8 and whether a subdivision that is
2 established and annexed after 2011 would be counted as a non-agricultural use, and whether the same
3 subdivision would be count as a non-agricultural land use in SA Factor 9.
4

5 Hall advised that if members think properties annexed by a municipality should *not* contribute toward 'LESA
6 creep' effect, then those areas (even though annexed) should be continue to be counted as agricultural use. Hall
7 said he would prefer that annexed properties count as non-agricultural, and so he would advise no changes to
8 the SA Factor 8 guidelines. Hall recommended clarifying text for the narrative of SA Factor 8 "except for
9 development that has been annexed into a municipality."
10

11 Monte reviewed final proposed adjustment to the narrative for SA Factor 9.
12

13 Griest asked for a final vote on the LESA Update draft, as intended to be amended. Jones asked about the
14 process for correcting a mistake, if one is found once the LESA Update is in actual use. Hall addressed procedure
15 for amending the LESA, stating that relatively minor corrections could be reviewed by the County Board
16 Committee of the Whole, and then by the Zoning Board of Appeals, since the ZBA is a primary user, with a ZBA
17 recommendation back to the County Board. Hall would recommend the LESA Update be adopted so that people
18 expect that it is the LESA that is in place.
19

20 Griest proposed that the Committee move to bring this to closure, possibly allowing for scheduling of a final short
21 meeting to review final text clarifications and not substantive changes.
22

23 LESA Protection Ratings 24

25 Monte reviewed final field test results based on the LESA Update Draft dated February 10, 2012. Monte
26 reviewed the total score Protection Rating categories and point spread, and the option of further adjusting the
27 point spread for a more equitable point spread between rating categories. Hall pointed out that the existing
28 LESA protection ratings have a total of 100 points for the 'very high' and 'high' categories combined, and only 20
29 points for 'moderate' category. Hall said he does not know how to explain the present protection ratings to a
30 landowner. It appears to Hall that the *existing* LESA is biased and set up to result in high or very high ratings.
31 Hall pointed out that the Draft Update has less of a point spread across categories, however, that with 80 points
32 for the high and very high ratings and 40 points for the moderate rating, there still appears that the scores are
33 biased and set up to result in high or very high ratings. Hall requested members consider this and if members
34 believe that some degree of bias toward a high or very high rating is warranted based on the importance of
35 Champaign County agriculture, then that is fine.
36

37 Petrie questioned why have four levels, and why not just three levels of protection ratings, and why have 'very
38 high' and 'high' and not the same type of categories for 'moderate'. Donoho questioned the intent of evening
39 out the point spread. Donoho indicated his preference is to consider the protection ratings, once all factors are
40 set in place. Griest clarified this means that the value for SA Factor 2, based on a recommended value for Best
41 Prime Farmland, should be identified.
42

43 Hall identified one inconsistency in test score results for Test Site 8 under the third assumption shown on Page 2
44 of Attachment A. Hall observed that the Draft LESA SA Factors contribute to the LESA being a robust instrument.
45 Hall provided the example that the Draft LESA can differentiate between subject sites within the 1-1/2 mile
46 extraterritorial jurisdiction or within the CUGA, and the existing LESA cannot do that.
47

48 Donoho understands that three factors could be considered in setting the bar: raw average number of the
49 subject site (e.g., 91, 92, 93, 94, etc.); the soil groups; and the percentage for which of the groups you select.
50
51

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Best Prime Farmland Definition Recommendation

Petrie questioned whether soils outside of the CUGA and within the 1-1/2 mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of municipalities should be considered as part of the estimates of soils at risk, as shown in Attachment C of the February 14 staff memorandum.

Griest reviewed the purpose of the February 14 memorandum Attachment C was to more succinctly display overall estimates of how many acres of Best Prime Farmland soils, if comprising a minimum percentage of any site, would be placed at risk of not being protected when combined on a subject site with non-Best Prime Farmland.

Monte explained that the Handout 1 distributed at the meeting is intended as an 'apples-to-apples' comparison.

Motion by Krapf to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes, seconded by Donoho. Motion carried with unanimous support.

Petrie shared that based on recent land use projections data obtained by the City of Champaign, sufficient land is available for development for the near term, the economy is expected to recover by approximately 2018, and sprawl continues to cost. Petrie suggested that five years from now the LESA Update should be revisited based on the projections data.

Griest asked overall, as a group, where members lean on the Best Prime Farmland (BPF) definition options—referring to those provided in Handout 1 for now. A couple of members responded their leaning toward the Agriculture Value Groups (AVG) 1,2, 3, or 4 soils with a minimum percentage of 10% of AVG 1, 2, 3, or 4 soils option. Griest indicated she leans toward the other spectrum of the Handout 1 options shown. Based on her 10 years of experience serving on ZBA, Griest believes the existing LESA falls short of differentiating between soils types, and she was hoping for more improvement in differentiating between soils.

Donoho asked for historic real information regarding LESA proposals already processed, and what kind of a breakdown occurred in soils (e.g., AVG 1, 2,3 and 4) in order to form a basis for the Committee recommendation. Hall indicated that such a breakdown regarding AVG soils 1 and 2 was provided with the January 4, 2012 memorandum. Jones asked how those RRO cases played out and Hall summarized the outcomes. Monte reminded the existing LESA AVG and Draft LESA AVG differ in their composition, so this would not be a direct comparison.

Griest believes that if BPF is defined to be inclusive (such as the AVG 1, 2, 3, and 4 option shown in Handout 1), then landowners will believe they have a chance for approval of a rezoning request and they will pay the significant costs of engineering plans and the public hearing at the ZBA only to find out that receiving approval is actually extremely difficult and, in fact, very unlikely; but alternately if the BPF is defined with a higher bar (such as the AVG 1 and 2 option shown in Handout 1), then landowners will hopefully get the message that unless they have a solid mitigating circumstance, they have less of a chance of obtaining a rezoning approval. Griest said that engineering firms will usually always advise their clients that any problem can be addressed with an engineered solution. Griest views LESA as one protection tool, and it is not the only means of protecting farmland, and that a rezoning request is rarely only about the soil.

Petrie reminded members that the BPF definition will additionally apply in the Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Zoning Ordinance outside the scope of the LESA evaluation.

Reviewing Attachment C of the February 14 memorandum, Hall pointed out that, with an BPF definition option such as a AVG 1, 2, 3, and 4 option, if there is a subject site containing AVG 1, 2, 3, and 4 soils, there is no guarantee that the AVG 1 and 2 soils on that subject site will be protected, and that it is possible that the AVG 3

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1 or 4 soils on that site would instead not be converted. Also based on Attachment C, Hall made the point that the
2 same 'at risk' goals can be met with different outcomes of total non-BPF acreage.
3

4 **Motion** by Donoho to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes, seconded by Krapf. **Motion carried with**
5 **unanimous support.**
6

7 Next Meeting Date

8

9 Griest said the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 7, 2012 with a start time of 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and no
10 extensions of time. Griest requested the agenda begin with the 'LE,' (the recommendation for a Best Prime
11 Farmland definition).
12

13 Adjournment

14

15 Griest adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.
16

17 Respectfully submitted,
18

19 Susan Monte, LESA Update Committee Facilitator
20



DATE:	February 10, 2012
TO:	LESA Update Committee
FROM:	Susan Monte
RE:	February 22 Meeting Agenda Items

Final Proposed Adjustments to SA Factors

Provided for review is the LESA Update Draft dated February 10, 2012, along with a Strikeout Version of the same LESA Update Draft. The Strikeout Version contains information regarding some final proposed adjustments, as follows:

Fine-Tune SA Factor 2c

Staff proposes to add a second part to Factor 2C to add the capability to score 10 points for a Prime Farmland subject site which is a part of a larger tax parcel as of April, 2011, provided that subject site, together with other sites that are a part of that same tax parcel and which have been authorized (via a rezoning) to convert to a non-ag use, are larger than 25 acres.

Expand SA Factors 3 and 8

The 'LESA creep effect' is a phenomenon brought to the Committee's attention at the January 4 meeting. Staff proposes an adjustment to expand both SA Factors 3 and 8 in order to address this concern. The Strikeout Update Draft dated February 10, 2012 (on the blue paper) contains detail of the proposed expansion of these two factors. Attachment A contains a copy of the LESA Guidebook description of 'creep effect.'

John Hall highlights benefits of the proposed expansion of SA Factors 3 and 8, as follows:

"The proposed adjustment to SA Factors 3 and 8:

- does not penalize a landowner today for something that might happen in the future;
- does not allow a landowner in the future to benefit from any conversion that is approved today; and
- does allow for creation of new UIUC or forest preserve properties (not likely, but possible) which would not result in reduced LESA scores on adjacent properties.

SA Factor 9 Narrative Clarification

An adjustment to the narrative portion of SA Factor 9 is proposed to clarify this factor is a general indicator of an existing land use incompatibility with production agriculture and an incompatibility with livestock facilities vis-à-vis the *Illinois Livestock Management Facilities Act*.

Field Test Scoring Results

The LESA scores for the 15 Field Test sites are completed based on the previously assumed Best Prime Farmland (BPF) at LE = 91. The decision to use an assumed BPF of LE = 91 was made back in December. For comparative purposes, staff will substitute the following BPF definition options to the scoring of the 15 test sites:

AVG = Agriculture Value Groups

BPF consists of:

- all AVG 1 or 2 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of 20% AVG 1 or 2 soils
- all AVG 1, 2 or 3 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of 15% AVG 1, 2, or 3 soils
- all AVG 1, 2, or 3 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of 25% AVG 1, 2, or 3 soils
- all AVG 1, 2, 3, or 4 soils, or any combination of soils with a minimum of 20% AVG 1, 2, 3, or 4 soils

The results* of the above comparison and any further suggestion regarding adjustment of the LESA Protection Ratings will be provided to Committee members early next week. (Draft minutes from the January 25, 2012 meeting will be provided for review at that time also.)

BPF Recommendation

Attachment C contains additional BPF definition options data, as discussed at the January 25, 2012 meeting.

Attachments

- A Excerpt regarding 'LESA creep effect' from the LESA Guidebook
- B Comparison of BPF Options as Applied to the 15 Field Test Sites* (to be provided separately)
- C BPF Definition Options Data

INTERPRETING LESA SCORES FOR DECISION MAKING

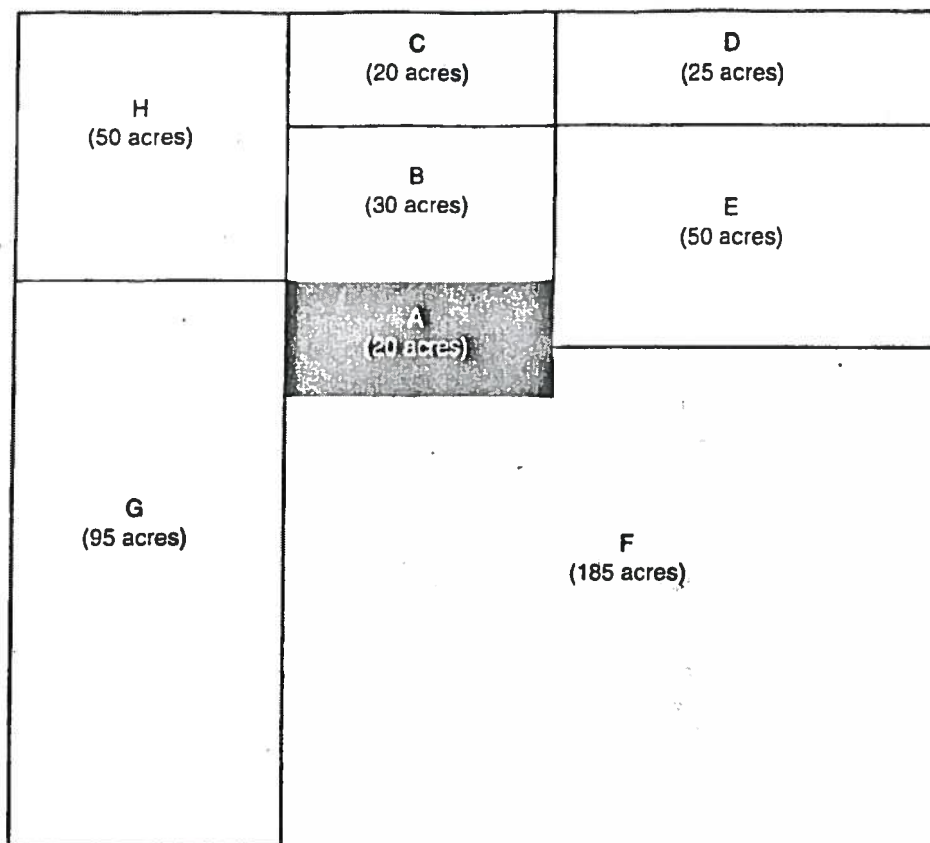


Figure 8.2. Surrounding area impact analysis

The creeping effect

One problem that arises is that case-by-case decisions may lower LESA scores on nearby sites, thereby justifying more land conversion decisions. This "creeping" boundary effect can be addressed by a surrounding area impact analysis of LESA scores. As shown in Figure 8.2, site A is 20 acres. In an area of mixed soils, site A may qualify for a land conversion permit because of poor soils and small size. The conversion may lower the SA score for site B enough that site B would then also qualify for conversion, which in turn could lower the scores of sites C, D, E, H, and possibly G and F.

The LESA system can be used to evaluate this situation by rating all sites within 1/4-mile (or some other distance) in a "before" and "after" sequence at the time a decision needs to be made. Each site is scored by assuming all parcels remain in agriculture. Each site is scored again assuming a proposed land conversion permit is granted. If the ratings in the surrounding parcels drop, it remains

to establish some threshold limit above which reductions in LESA scores will not be allowed.

For example, a jurisdiction might establish an "impact" threshold of a 5 percent reduction in the LESA score. For the "before" scenario, it is important that a specific year be established as a baseline. In this way, the impact threshold is relative to the LESA score of each parcel in an agricultural setting before the conversion is granted. The cut-off date is important because the first permit may lower an adjacent site's score by 10 points but still be within the 5 percent reduction threshold. Additional nearby permits may individually also be within a 5 percent threshold but lower the site's score even further, causing cumulative effects on LESA scores. Without a date, the 5 percent threshold would be applied to decreasing LESA scores, still causing a creeping effect. With this procedure, it may be decided that, while site A is marginal as an agricultural unit, it should be kept in agriculture to preserve the integrity of more valuable sites in the surrounding area. If this impact procedure is used, it may be helpful for the LESA committee to establish guidelines for when an impact assessment should be done. For example, sites above or below a certain size may trigger the evaluation, or it could be done for all LESA applications involving a land-use change.

Summary

Using a dataset of local samples and a fuzzy range for thresholds widens the base for site classifications by recognizing local variation and using local expert judgment in the LESA process. Thresholds can be set for individual factors to allow certain factors to compensate for others or to allow certain factors to control the ranking. Establishing factor thresholds as well as total LESA score thresholds provides much more information for the policy and decision making process. Various combinations of these thresholds can then be made for specific objectives or different LESA applications.

There are undoubtedly other ways to set thresholds. It takes only the imagination and creativity of the LESA committee to discover them. Local adaptation of these procedures should both improve the LESA process and provide a firmer base of local support for the site rankings.