

PLANNING FOR POLLUTION CONTROL

by

Robert W. Snyder

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Presented at a symposium on Water, Pollution, and People, sponsored by the West Central Minnesota Resource Conservation and Development Project, Alexandria, Minnesota, 12 March 1969.

Department of Agricultural Economics  
University of Minnesota  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

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by

Robert W. Snyder <sup>1/</sup>

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men  
Gang aft agley,  
An' lea'e us nought by grief an' pain  
For promis'd joy!"

Robert Burns

## Introduction

Like many first impressions, my initial reaction to the proposed topic did not move far beyond the beachhead stage before I started to raise questions about it. My thought sequence went something like this. When a planner says "planning," what he really means is "comprehensive planning." Not being sufficiently daring to challenge the appropriateness of this interpretation by the self-appointed savior profession of our muddled and fouled twentieth century habitat, I proceeded to consider my assignment to be to make a few organized remarks about "comprehensive planning for pollution control."

Now I'm in real trouble. Any kind of planning for pollution control sounds to me like single purpose planning. And I've been traveling around the state saying that it is the failure of single purpose planning that has brought us to the comprehensive planner for his advice and counsel. If I talk about "comprehensive planning for pollution control," I'm beating a horse I myself have pronounced dead or at least past the point where beating will do any good. Besides that,

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<sup>1/</sup> Assistant Professor and Extension Land Economist, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Minnesota.

such a topic is the same contradiction in terms that I've complained about when certain agencies require such things as "comprehensive sewer and water plans" for grant and loan eligibility.

To resolve this seemingly insurmountable barrier and still pay homage to the general subject of this symposium, I've chosen to speak on the topic of "comprehensive planning in rural areas with water pollution problems." This immediately puts me in the position of having a topic that is a hundredfold too broad for even a week-long continuous symposium. I would argue, however, that this is something that cannot, ostrich-like, be avoided. Much as we might like to be scientific and analyze and subdivide until each particle can be neatly pitched into the proper testube, where it can be observed and studied from every conceivable angle, let's remind ourselves that even in George Orwell's 1984, testubes had yet to produce a baby. The affairs of even the smallest community, like life itself, are just not that simple. Unless we are willing to take a grander overview of the whole, use symptomatic diagnosis to ferret out the real bottlenecks to the solution of our problems, we are likely to find ourselves in the position of the industrious four-year-old who became extremely efficient in filling a bucket with sand only to find--too late--that there was no bottom in the bucket.

For my purposes, however, I would like to place some geographical limits on the area of concern. I think most of us will agree that the principal source of our anxiety is the rapidly deteriorating condition of the 12,000 officially accounted for permanent lakes that have blessed the rural Minnesota landscape.

Most of these appear on our state map in a natural region shaped like a mirror image of a comma. The sixteen counties in attendance here represent the midsection of this region.

There exists within this region, in varying degrees of concentration, a combination of circumstances that provides a setting for comprehensive planning and water pollution problem solving that is unique unto itself. In its simplest form this setting can be thought of as having at least three dimensions: the physical, the economic and the institutional. With your permission, I'd like to look at each of these in turn.

### The Physical Dimension

The physical dimension is, paradoxically, one which seems most obvious but about which we know very little for sure. It is transparently a region whose overriding physical characteristic is the presence of large numbers of significantly sized bodies of surface water we call lakes. Strangely, hindsight tells us, these lakes, despite their obvious importance, have never been systematically studied in any detail. Variation in their physical attributes is extreme. Each has different characteristics in area, depth, outline, volume, water level fluctuation, water source, temperature, vertical stratification, submerged vegetation, nutrient levels, and so forth. The physical characteristics of the lake shore also vary tremendously, even for a single lake: surface soils and subsoil strata range from gravel to heavy clay; topography may be cliff-like or level; vegetation may be lush swamp grasses, coniferous and deciduous trees and brush, or absent.

We don't know how many miles of shoreline there are in Minnesota, but we do know that a very large proportion of it, probably 75 to 80 percent, is undeveloped or is developed at a density far below even the reasonably generous level of one dwelling per hundred feet of shoreline. In developed portions, second homes predominate, with numerous "primary" homes around certain lakes. Commercial resorts and public developments take up most of the remainder. There are a very few large scale planned second home developments with common recreational facilities scattered throughout the region. Almost all units have individual water supply and waste disposal systems. The road access system is largely unpaved at the local level, often with super highway connections with the Twin Cities. Nonfrontage property is strongly agricultural in some areas, forested in others, and typically has a relatively high percentage of commercial property and limited residential development. The growing season for most of the the region is short. Studies now underway by some of my colleagues at the University of Minnesota will fill in some of the large gaps in our knowledge about the physical resources in this rural lakes region. We hope that having this information available will ease the solution to the problem. It may be, however, that a major contribution of these studies will be simply to disclose high level hodge-podge that now exists.

#### The Economic Dimension

The economic dimension is less obvious but no less important than the physical resource base upon which it decisively depends. Personal income for the region's

inhabitants is largely generated from two sources: (1) visitors to resorts and other commercial lodging places; (2) visitors to privately owned vacation homes. A very large proportion of the income enters the region during the short summer season, and much of it leaves the area when temporary seasonal employees and others leave to spend the rest of the year elsewhere. Under these conditions, many of our economic base theories do not work well, so we economists tend to make our predictions if any, on the cautious side. Even then we can get "caught" when we forget to forget some of our basic assumptions that don't fit.

We do know that there are approximately 4,000 resorts in Minnesota. Their economic importance is unquestionable, but leakage of resort customer's dollars to other areas is thought by many to be high. It may be unfair to infer from this that their contribution to the economy is overshadowed by that from second home visitors. Doing this, however, gives us the opportunity to look more closely at second homes, whose numbers approximately doubled in the last intercensal decade and for whom leakage may be much less. Census of housing data suggest that there may be as many as 100,000 seasonal dwelling units in Minnesota by 1970. Studies carried on by the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University show that seasonal homes owned by Twin Cities area residents and about three hours driving time from Minneapolis are used an average of 64 days each year. Total visitors per unit average 33 persons and most are for overnight weekend stays or longer. Disregarding acquisition costs, each owning household on the average spends an estimated \$1,190 per year in the seasonal home community. Total local expenses by all visitors are reasonably

estimated at \$1,800. Only about seven percent of this is for property taxes. Most of it is for building construction and maintenance, groceries, household supplies, and services of various kinds. Those concerned with pollution control will be interested to learn that annual local expenditures by all visitors for the approximately one half of the units having complete indoor plumbing are an estimated \$2,560 per cottage as compared with \$1,220 for the half lacking complete indoor facilities.

After remaining fairly constant for at least a dozen years prior to 1955, prices paid for unimproved frontage in the area studied have more than tripled since then. We estimate that they now stand at the relatively modest figure of approximately 24 dollars per front foot. Most sells in frontage units of 100 to 200 feet. If there are, in fact, 100,000 seasonal dwelling units in Minnesota in 1970, the total annual economic contribution to rural communities may well be something on the order of 175 million dollars, allowing for somewhat lower expenditures for vacation homes located further away from Minneapolis and those not owned by Twin Citians. This compares with total agricultural sales of \$179 million in 1964 for the 10 border counties from Yellow Medicine County to Canada, which, as you know, contain some of the best agricultural land in the world. Even allowing for substantial leakage for this income to other areas, the basic foundation of the economies of the eight counties with the largest concentrations of lakeshore vacation homes rests heavily on the seasonal homeowner's dollar.

### The Institutional Dimension

The institutional dimension is an intriguing one, but one that is frequently overlooked. The major aspects of it that bear on the situation at hand are those that relate to government. The rural lakes region is located in subdivisions of local government, created by the state, called counties. Counties have been further subdivided into townships and villages which are, again, creatures of the state. Alongside but not part of this organizational scheme is a system of single purpose districts that provide public education.

Most of us will agree that this governmental structure has functioned as well as might reasonably be expected in rural Minnesota. It is not without its defects, however, especially in the rural lakes region. All local government subdivisions rely heavily on the taxation of real property for local revenue purposes. Looked at from the standpoint of benefit received, the Minnesota classified ad valorem property tax, despite some recent reforms, is still highly discriminatory against vacation homes. Changes made by the 1967 legislature actually had the effect of increasing the degree of discrimination. In part this is due to a classification system involving assessment ratios, established by statute, and the special privileges accorded to homestead property. In a somewhat larger part, it is due to the preeminence of school taxes in the makeup of the total mill rate and the fact that no educational benefits from this accrue to the seasonal resident, who is taxed heavily elsewhere for the same purposes. The favored circumstances of counties and school districts with vacation homes is well known and has been documented by recent studies at the University.

The taxation of mobile homes, which appears to discriminate in their favor, and thus tends to make them unwelcome, is another interesting aspect of the property tax institution as it exists in Minnesota.

Local revenues plus intergovernmental grants and aids from the state and federal level are used to finance schools, roads, fire and police protection, welfare services and general government activities. Control over levels and types of expenditures is in the hands of government officials elected by local year round residents. The seasonal homeowner does not have the franchise.

Most, but not all, lakeshore property is tightly held in ownership by individuals in what is called a fee simple estate. In this country, this is a strong form of ownership which has traditionally been held in high esteem and places few encumbrances on the holder of such property. Some, but not much, frontage property, is owned by agencies of the county, state or federal governments, especially within the boundaries of established state or national forests. Many lakes have state owned public access points for private boat owners.

Control over the development of privately owned lakeshore property by local units is permitted under state law, but very few counties or townships have exercised this privilege. Control over publicly held land is vested in the owning agency. Control over the lake itself normally vests in the state, except for small bodies, but local units may exercise control over the use of lake surface.

Superimposed on this basic institutional structure is a conglomeration of state and federal programs that provide technical services, loans and grants to qualified organized units and individuals for a variety of useful purposes.

### Steps to Define the Problem

Given the physical, economic and institutional dimensions of the setting, how can comprehensive planning function and how will pollution be affected by it? We can talk about this more productively if we agree on some definitions. I define pollution as any change in chemical and physical attributes that reduces the value of a substance for some useful purpose. I define comprehensive planning as a process of study, goal setting, plan making and plan implementation for the purposes of (1) directing the physical development and use of natural and man-made resources and (2) coordinating the efforts of all public agencies within a given geographic area. This, only one of many imperfect definitions of comprehensive planning, serves my purposes for the moment. 1/

Let me narrow the discussion by restricting it to comprehensive planning and pollution control at the local level. History will tell us eventually whether or not this is a poor use of your and my time. For there is no longer any question about whether or not water pollution will be controlled. Clearly, it will. Whether or not it will be controlled by local units of government in cooperation with agencies of the state or federal government or by state and federal agencies alone has not been determined so decisively. If local government defaults, the outcome is clear. If this happens much of what I have to say is irrelevant.

It will be useful also to eliminate from consideration pollution from "remote" sources. Let us assume, for purposes of discussion, that water enters the lake

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1/ For those who would like a more complete definition as I am using the term may consult Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended, prior to the amendments passed by the Congress in 1968.

or the ground around the lake, from whatever source, in an unpolluted state. I recognize that in some instances this may be a very invalid assumption. I am depending on your benevolence to permit me in this instance to exercise my prerogative as an economist.

### The Role of Comprehensive Planning

"Wisdom is knowing what to do.  
Virtue is the doing it."

Carol Aronovicci

Left for our more detailed observation is pollution resulting from the use of lakeshore property and the lake itself. Again, there is no question about the control of pollution from these immediate sources. We have reached a point in the development of our society where we will not permit careless and self-gratifying individuals to destroy natural resources that are of increasingly greater value for society as a whole, given their limited supply and the changing pattern of life styles that exists. The truly crucial questions are those focusing on how much pollution control is going to cost and how will the total cost be allocated. It is in determining answers to these two questions that the role of comprehensive planning could be one of overriding importance.

The contribution of comprehensive planning varies with the source of pollution. Where pollution results from the intrusion of wastes from concentrations of people, such as municipalities, resorts and other commercial establishments, concentrations of livestock, such as large feedlots, and industrial by-products, its prevention by code enforcement or court order, perhaps under the administration

of a state agency, may be most appropriate. In these cases, the cost of eliminating pollution should be assumed by the violating unit. The role of comprehensive planning will be, at most, a relatively minor one.

Where pollution can be traced to the residential use of lakeshore property by human beings outside of concentrations of people, we have a sea horse of a different color. Presumably the incidence of cost still should rest on the polluter, i.e. the homeowner. But the magnitude of total cost can be sharply affected by the application of comprehensive planning. Considering the vital economic contribution of vacation homes and the obvious attractiveness of lower costs, it may be worth our while to open our ears to what the comprehensive planner has to say.

Comprehensive planning only operates well in a dynamic setting. This we decidedly have in the rural lakes region. The rise in numbers of second homes, usually lakeshore "cottages" in Minnesota, during the last two decades has been nothing short of phenomenal. This is true for Minnesota and for the nation as a whole. This phenomenon has led some to predict the incipient disappearance of available lake frontage in Minnesota. Despite these apparent claims to the contrary, even at our present estimated rate of development of approximately 4,000 new lakeshore cottages in Minnesota each year, I believe we shall still see the year 1980 with less than half of our Minnesota lake frontage developed at the relatively generous density equivalent of 100 feet per unit. This is assuming no development of non-frontage property for second homes. A nationwide study of second homes has predicted that future development will

increasingly consist of complete "planned unit developments" in which limited lake frontage is shared among numerous cottages on separate building lots. They also share golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts and other recreational facilities. Planned unit developments, (PUD) have already appeared in Minnesota. They are strongly competitive with cottages associated only with a limited amount of private frontage and will become more so as the price of frontage continues upward. As this happens, the rate of development of frontage property may be slowed.

Given these facts, it is clear that the continuation of present trends will produce a development pattern around most of our lakes that will be typified by scatteration of individual dwellings or small clusters of dwellings, plus a few PUD's, some commercial establishments and public accommodations. Under these low density arrangements which will probably be with us for some time, the only feasible way to dispose of household and other wastes is through private disposal systems. Locally controlled boards or commissions, strenuously enforcing adequate sanitation or septic tank codes and ordinances can prevent lake water pollution. Comprehensive planning and zoning can make a contribution by identifying areas where problems are likely to occur, as a guide to code formation, and establishing physical development standards to coincide with code enforcement needs. To a very limited extent, "use" zoning may prevent development at some of the poorest locations. 1/

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1/ In addition, subdivision regulations can prevent haphazard development with inadequate physical facilities. Very important for immediate future conditions

This method for pollution control has the advantage of minimum interference with the property rights of individuals. It has the disadvantage of high cost. It will be costly and difficult for government to administer and it will be costly to the homeowner, especially for disposal systems on so-called "tight" soils. Costs will be magnified as private disposal systems have to be replaced with public systems as development in the area reaches a certain density. The customer essentially pays double under these circumstances. Many areas are well on the way through such a process as this.

The alternative to code enforcement and supportive measures and the ultimate high cost is to use comprehensive planning in a somewhat bolder context. Measures can be taken that will allow a higher level of control by some local authority over the pattern of development. Under this method, intensive development would take place in an orderly fashion and could be served by public waste disposal systems from the start. I have recently seen disposal systems, using modern technology, that could serve dwelling units in such a development more cheaply and more efficiently than private systems. As developed areas expand, waste collection and treatment facilities could also be expanded without excessive cost. Lakeshore areas with tight soils and high water tables could be developed nearly equally as well as those with more favorable physical characteristics.

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will be regulations encouraging and controlling the establishment of PUD's, which combine aspects of zoning, subdivision regulations and code enforcement.

Savings on waste disposal are one part of the total picture. Lakeshore areas need many other public services such as roads, law enforcement and fire protection, and in some instances, even public water and street lights. As some of you know, many townships are already having some financial difficulty in providing roads in lakeshore areas, while complaints about poor roads are frequently heard from the seasonal resident. Would orderly development make it possible to provide better services at less cost? Many people believe so.

We have known for a long time that a scattered pattern of residential development was costly to provide with almost all types of public services. The planners for suburban and exurban areas convincingly remind us of it almost daily. The planners, however, also tell us that we can control development through comprehensive planning. This has not, so far, proven to be a statement of very great veracity. Despite many claims to the contrary, our experience in trying to prevent urban sprawl and leapfrog residential development has said loudly and clearly that we are losing the battle. Whether we like to admit it or not, zoning and other land use control devices, despite their beneficial achievements in other matters, have been strikingly ineffective in controlling sprawl. This has been due to three basic facts of life.

1. Holders of undeveloped land, sometimes unwisely, prefer playing the game of "real estate roulette" to the unspeculative security offered by orderly development.
2. Local government decisions regarding zoning and related matters are strongly influenced by the preferences of these landowners.

3. We, as a people, have a long tradition of strong property rights and are reluctant, even where political influence is not a factor, to take away the privilege of playing "real estate roulette" under a control system that pays the landowner nothing for giving up this so-called right. 1/

Aside from the easily visible effects of this failure, studies recently completed have given us some stronger evidence. It is an established fact that approximately 75 percent of all requests for zoning variances and rezoning have been approved, despite the wholly justified complaint of professional planners that so doing eventually destroys a large part of the value of comprehensive planning.

I see no reason to think zoning is going to be any more effective in the rural lakes region than in the suburbs and the exurbs. Besides the three basic facts of life just mentioned, if what has happened to date is any indication, we are unwilling or unable to learn enough about lakeshore areas to zone them intelligently for purposes of augmenting and effectuating a system of sanitation code enforcement, let alone trying to do anything about disorderly and costly development. Clearly, we have a long road ahead of us.

We can do much better. We can do a better job of studying our basic resources and situation. We can, and undoubtedly will, zone more intelligently as we get some experience under our belt and have more and better information as an input to the zoning process. We would do well, however, to remind ourselves that zoning is a very imperfect tool. If the stakes are high enough to make it worth our while, we will need to employ other measures.

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1/ It might be added that we also have not developed and accepted a system that does pay off the landowner.

One of these that has proven to be a very effective force, with zoning, in guiding development and preventing economic waste disposal problems is the installation of public sewerage in desirable development areas before development takes place. The effectiveness of such a procedure around our lakes could be enhanced if improved roads, and perhaps even public water and street lamps in some instances, were provided at the same time. If the stakes go even higher we may eventually find ourselves willing to exercise more direct public control over development through the mechanism of "development rights" for particular pieces of property purchased from private landowners and held but not exercised by the public until they are returned to private ownership when development is considered desirable.

These seem like strong measures. They are. We may have to use strong measures to save our lakes. If, as some claim, our lakes are our most important resource, the balance of the scales may be moving us toward a position where the alternatives are even less palatable. If, in fact, economic growth hinges on attracting the seasonal home owner, it will be imperative for us to keep our lakes "clean" and provide good roads and other public services at a reasonable cost to the temporary resident. It will be very difficult to do this without using some sort of lakeshore development control measures associated with comprehensive planning. To delay may be only to resist the inevitable. We cannot expect to find 1940 conditions in 1975.

The Institutional Problem

"I have seen the enemy and he is us."

Pogo (paraphrased)

I would like to turn now to a few remarks about what appears to me to be the major stumbling block to the successful utilization of comprehensive planning and related techniques in preventing water pollution, and providing adequate public services, including sewerage, at a reasonable cost. This stumbling block, stated in its simplest form, is the inadequacy and inappropriateness of our existing institutional arrangements. The current trend toward centralization of authority at the state and federal levels of government is in large part a result of the failure of local government to adapt itself and its institutional arrangements to the exigencies of the last third of the twentieth century. If we, as Americans, honestly believe in government close to the people, it is time to start accelerating the rate of change in these matters to compensate for the tremendously accelerating rate of change in technology as it places new demands on our resources.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of our institutions is nowhere more apparent than in the seventeen counties of our rural lakes region where seasonal homes are concentrated. Designed for a scattered, agrarian, immobile society which largely ignored the lakes, they are now asked to serve what on a given summer weekend amounts to a transplanted city of three quarters of a million people. This temporary population comprises extremely mobile seasonal home families and guests, resort guests, and others attracted by the many lakes and

what they and related facilities offer in the way of active and passive recreational opportunities. Of these two-thirds are members of families who own vacation homes in the lake community.

Our limited capability of dealing with this situation has several facets. In part, the problem is simply that we are trying to manage what is essentially an urban community with urban problems with units of government, laws and other institutions that were designed for rural conditions. Consider, for example, the very limited capability of so-called "non-urban" townships to provide traditional urban services, such as public sewerage, in spite of seasonal concentration of temporary residents that may far exceed the population of many so-called "urban" townships who do have many additional powers. Our sister state of Wisconsin has made some moves in this direction by permitting rural townships to organize sanitation districts for water, sewer and solid water disposal purposes. This extension of a needed power to rural government serves as only one example of changes that might be made in our own structure.

In part, the problem is that local government units in Minnesota have not been granted powers that would enable them to be effective in controlling urban sprawl, whether in metropolitan areas or elsewhere. There does not yet exist in this state, for example, a law that would enable them to acquire "development rights" and thus control development in a positive fashion without taking away any landowner privileges without payment.

In part, the problem is that we have thus far failed to recognize the

special situation of the seasonal home community. The story in a nutshell is this. The economy in these areas depends heavily on attracting the seasonal homeowner. Most of the local activities that make the community more or less desirable to the seasonal homeowner are functions of local government. These include providing roads, fire and police protection and other public services, including zoning and other comprehensive planning and pollution control measures. Local government decisions frequently reflect the interests of year round residents to the detriment of the interests of seasonal residents, who do not have the local franchise.

It is fairly apparent that our political system is no longer functioning as its founders intended. In an age when as much as 80 percent of the assessed value of real property is classified as seasonal in some existing township units (and it is well known that many seasonal properties are not actually so listed on the tax roles), it goes against the grain of our sense of justice to know that absentee owners have practically no control over local public affairs. The irrationality of the existing arrangement is amplified by the realization that one out of every five persons changes his place of residence each year. There was a time when the ownership of property was necessary to vote. Perhaps we have over-reacted to what was once looked upon as an undemocratic institution. Other states with large numbers of second homes have moved in the direction of giving their owners a voice in the affairs of second home communities. In New York State, for example, persons with more than one residence have the option of voting in either one district or the other. We need to think seriously and

realistically about something similar for Minnesota. It is highly probable that sizable benefits would accrue to the economy of the rural lakes region if seasonal homeowner suffrage became a reality.

It is fairly clear that if we are going to do a satisfactory job of managing our rural resources in the lakes region, we need to make substantial changes in our institutional pattern. Just what kind of a creature would emerge is difficult to foretell. Many important decisions will have to be made by people possessed with the interest, wisdom and good judgment that typifies those attending this symposium.

#### A Reorganization Proposal

In the little time that remains, I'd like to offer a general and very incomplete proposal that may stimulate some thinking and serve as a starting point for deliberation. We might start with the notion of a jurisdictional unit comparable to a planning "district" as defined by federal planning assistance legislation: "all or part of the (present) area of jurisdiction of (a) one or more counties, and (b) one or more other units of general local government (outside metropolitan areas)." The boundaries of such a "district" to be useful should be based upon natural features. Sizewise, it should be at least as large as the area surrounding and including a single lake. More probably it would include several lakes, perhaps as one or more "watersheds." The maximum size is less clear. As size increases, the advantages of efficiency and the capability for using the continuous services of professionals are gained

at the expense of closeness to the people and a sharply defined community of interest. Some of the advantages of size can be obtained if several units join together for specific purposes, as authorized for existing units under the so-called "joint powers act." Another possibility, of course, would be to install agencies similar to the Metropolitan Airport Commission, which would be in charge of specific functions throughout several smaller units. <sup>1/</sup>

The internal administrative structure of these "districts" could take a variety of forms, depending on their functions. Some type of elected governing board plus an elected executive officer would likely be desirable, Since much of the property in these districts will be owned by nonresidents, provision should be made for absentee owners to either (1) vote in elections for district officials, or (2) join together in petitioning for specific public improvements or for specific functions, including the adoption of adequate lakeshore development controls. (The existing Minnesota Watershed District Act allows a limited version of this arrangement).

This new unit, organized on the basis of natural features on the landscape ideally would have all of the powers now available to municipalities plus some that have not yet been authorized for any unit of local government in Minnesota, but essential if comprehensive planning is to be successful. At least the following powers would seem to be essential: (1) the power to

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<sup>1/</sup> Another, more pertinent example may be the "lake conservation district" authorized for Lake Minnetonka by special legislation in 1967.

raise local revenue through taxes, various types of assessments for specific purposes, sometimes for specific subdistricts or areas, (2) the power to raise money through the issuance of bonds and other borrowing methods, (3) the power to receive grants and loans from state and federal agencies, (4) the power to spend money for roads and streets, professional assistance, law enforcement, fire protection, and other public purposes, (5) the power to enact zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, sanitary and building and other codes, (6) the power to adopt an official map showing future public improvements, and to adopt a long-range capital budget, (7) the power to purchase lakeshore frontage in fee simple or, just as important, the power to purchase and sell "development rights" in lakeshore property, for purposes of controlling and regulating development, (8) the power to regulate the use of the surface of lakes within the district, (9) the power to levy fines and use other measures to enforce rules and regulations, (10) the power to join with other existing or similar units to perform any of the foregoing.

A natural reaction to this hopefully heuristic proposal is to assert that existing units are capable of handling the situation without creating new governmental subdivisions. Perhaps, with some substantial changes in our present laws, this is so. There are some quite troublesome problems, however. Existing counties appear to be in the best position to exercise control and to organize "special districts" in the region. But the County Board of Commissioners represent, by law, the interests of the entire county, including in most counties, a large majority who do not live in the lakes region. It is difficult for them to justify to their

constituents spending sufficient time or money to solve the many problems that are specific to the lakes region. The county has many useful functions related to the successful development of a resource-recreation based economy, including planning and zoning. The special and intense problems of the lakes region, however, are in most instances, quite different from those facing the entire county. The same reasoning that led to the establishment of villages and cities as separate independent units of government suggests that the county, despite its obvious strength and ability, cannot do all that needs to be done.

If we look within the county, we are left with the alternatives of townships or villages. Townships do not at present have the necessary powers, have very limited experience in dealing with development problems and have existing boundaries that violate the criteria for our so-called planning districts. These problems could be overcome, but not without great difficulty, as you are well aware. Villages, with some exceptions, are not in existence, do have many of the necessary powers, and could be established with "natural" boundaries. They, obviously, also would not have any experience. Perhaps, however, newly organized villages represent the best solution to a large part of the institutional problem in the rural lakes region, since they would require the fewest changes in the established structure of existing state laws. It may even be possible for them to be organized under home rule charters that give some voting privileges to absentee owners. (For an opinion on this I defer to the experts from the legal profession.) A third alternative would be, of course, to organize into entirely new units, which would have to be authorized by new enabling legislation by the legislature.

Hardest to conceive in the short run, such an arrangement may have considerable long run advantages over the other alternatives.

We are still left with the drain of tax dollars out of lakeshore communities, where they are badly needed for local public purposes, to school districts. Perhaps this could be compensated for at the local level by the county, which is authorized to aid townships in constructing township roads. Of course, with the classified property tax system, statutory changes by the state are another strong possibility.

This all represents only one man's admittedly naive opinion of what might be done to make comprehensive planning effective in developing the economy of the lakes region. It is in sorts a trial balloon. But it also represents a step in a series of rethinking activities that will, it is hoped, stochastically lead to some sort of an ideal goal toward which we can move. The institutional arrangements pictured by such a goal will be only, in the words of William Shakespeare, "a consumation, devoutly to be wished." We probably can never expect to achieve their realization, certainly not before additional rethinking and new technology make them obsolete, even as an expression of a goal. We can, however, and must, move in the direction of restructuring our institutional patterns so that they are more in line with our very pressing present day and future needs. Unless we do so, the heritage we would like to pass on to our grandchildren may no longer be in existence.

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Omar Khayyam

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