

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Overview

The Town of New Glarus' outdoor recreation needs have been determined by two means. The needs were first determined by a combination of past interest and usage, current population and demand, interest derived by survey results and citizen input. The second was by evaluating future growth projections and development activities. Needs were identified relating to Conserving Natural Resources/Open Space, Educational Property Seminars, Trails, Community Parks, Local Partnership and Recreation.

B. Population Projections:

The State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Bureau of Demographic Services, prepares population estimates and projections for all municipalities in Wisconsin. The Department estimated the Town's population as 1,189 as of January 1, 2004. The percent change from 1990 to 2004 estimate is 102.6% with an annual rate of growth of 7.28%. The Town of New Glarus population increased 141.8% from 1970 to 2010. **Exhibit 4** identifies the population changes in the Town of New Glarus.

Exhibit 4

Population Changes in the Town of New Glarus

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population Change</u>		<u>Percent Change</u>
1970	552	N/A	N/A
1980	510	-42	- 7.6%
1990	587	77	15.1%
2000	943	356	60.6%
2010	1,335	392	41.6%

The Town of New Glarus has been in a state of change for the past 20 years. For most of the Town's post-settlement history dairy farmers raised traditional crops including corn and alfalfa hay that was produced on farms averaging 200 acres in size; these residents had their recreational needs met without leaving home.

In the 1990's land use began to change as the active farmers neared retirement, agricultural and economic conditions changed, and children sought other careers. With few young adults interested in pursuing farming and even fewer landowners finding economic stability in that vocation, land began to be sold for housing. Proximity to Madison and the beautiful landscape brought an influx of interested home buyers. Local realtors saw potential benefits in investing in farms for residential development purposes.