

SUMMARY OF PLANNING METHOD

In evolving a planning approach, the environment was regarded as a series of "to whom it may concern" messages. The objective was to discern as many relevant "messages" as possible in making decisions which had environmental impact. Some messages were more obvious than others. Seasonal high water table of 0 to 1 feet would positively determine locations that present real difficulties for residential development, whereas it was more difficult to decipher the importance of other "messages" such as the importance of various plant species relative to development locations and conservation practices. The planning method employed to decode these environmental signals had the following sequence.

Data Assembly and Spatial Description

The descriptive process resulted in a complete inventory of climate, physiography, hydrology, soils, and vegetation of the site. It was necessary to create a comprehensive frame of reference to record the network of environmental "messages". This was done by transforming all the information from each discipline into spatial data. For example, each vegetation type, soil association, or watershed defined a certain area on the site. In some cases, these were specific areas, whereas in others they were approximate. They were all mapped at a common scale in a manner which allowed comparison and testing for the coincidence of phenomena.