WISCONSIN SHARES THE COST

by Robert E. Fox
SCS Wisconsin

The recognition of soil surveys as a tool in regional, county, and city planning is gaining momentum in Wisconsin. Local governments are demonstrating this by using local funds to help pay the cost of surveys. In fact cost-sharing has become a way of life for soil surveys in Wisconsin. In the fiscal year 1967, $65,000 in local funds were expended for soil surveys. This included funds received from Rock, Brown and Dane Counties, the cities of Rhinelander, Stevens Point and Plymouth, and a part of the Fox River Valley bordering Lake Winnebago.

It all started in 1963 when the Southeastern Wisconsin Planning Commission paid $125,680 to cover about half the cost of completing soil surveys in a seven-county area surrounding Milwaukee and Waukesha. Since that time agreements for cost-sharing have been signed with nine additional counties. Progressive soil surveys have been accelerated in Rock County (the Beloit-Jamesville area), Dane County (Madison), Brown County (Green Bay), Green Lake County (near Lake Winnebago), Portage County (Stevens Point), Columbia County (north of Madison adjoining Dane County), and Dunn, St. Croix and Eau Claire Counties (Eau Claire-Minneapolis vicinity). These areas are eager for information because they are feeling the pressure of the urban sprawl and have realized the benefits of planning and zoning with soil surveys as a guide. They are willing to pay part of the cost because they need the information now. The returns are manyfold, Kurt Bauer of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission estimates a 1 to 3,000 cost-benefit ratio. With returns like that, it's no wonder the soil scientist is the Cinderella of the SCS.