

**MINUTES**  
**SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

1:30 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building  
Commissioners' Conference Room  
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive  
Waukesha, WI 53187

Meeting Occurred in Person and Virtually via Video and Telephone Conference

**Present:**

**Excused:**

Commissioners:

Daniel S. Schmidt, Chairman  
Donna Brown-Martin  
Charles L. Colman  
Michael A. Crowley  
Jonathan Delagrave  
Brian Holt  
Dewayne Johnson  
Mary Knipper  
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.  
Natalia Minkel-Dumit  
Aloysius Nelson  
John O'Day  
Robert W. Pitts  
Jeffrey D. Schleif  
Peggy L. Shumway  
David L. Stroik  
Adam Tindall-Schlicht

James A. Ladwig

Staff:

Kevin J. Muhs	Executive Director
Benjamin R. McKay	Deputy Director
Elizabeth A. Larsen	Director of Administration
Laura K. Herrick	Chief Environmental Engineer
Carrie Pozum	Human Resources Assistant/Bookkeeper

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Schmidt called the Planning and Research Committee meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present. Chairman Schmidt indicated for the record that Commissioner Ladwig had asked to be excused.

Planning and Research Committee Meeting  
November 9, 2021

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 3, 2021, MEETING**

Chairman Schmidt asked if there were any changes or additions to the August 3, 2021, meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Schleif, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the August 3, 2021, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved.

**PRESENTATION PROVIDING AN UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL CHLORIDE IMPACT STUDY**

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Muhs to present an update on the Regional Chloride Impact Study. Mr. Muhs then introduced Ms. Laura K. Herrick, Chief Environmental Engineer to make the presentation.

During Ms. Herrick's presentation, the following comments and questions were made.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, concerning the use of brine on the roadways in the Lake Geneva area, Mr. Muhs responded that brine helps road salt adhere to the pavement, which can reduce the amount of chloride runoff into waterways and preserve aquatic life such as zooplankton that are essential to a healthy ecosystem. He noted that some other alternatives to road salt, such as beet juice, have been shown to lead to oxygen depletion in waterways.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Schleif, Ms. Herrick stated that with newer water softener units, the amount of salt that is used is adjustable.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Herrick stated that she would report on seawater chloride concentration in the meeting minutes. In a related question, Mr. Schleif asked about the toxicity level of Lake Michigan.

[Secretary's Note: Seawater chloride concentration is approximately 19,400 milligrams per liter. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources defines chloride acute toxicity as 757 milligrams per liter, and recent measurements in Lake Michigan have found a chloride concentration of approximately 15 milligrams per liter.]

In response to Mr. Colman's inquiry concerning chloride runoff peaking in February, Ms. Herrick stated it is due to snowfall, salting, and melting events.

Mr. Schleif inquired about the relationship between a snow event and storm sewers. Ms. Herrick responded that road salt can enter waterways through storm sewers.

In response to another inquiry by Mr. Schleif, Ms. Herrick stated that data is kept on snowfall events.

Mr. Johnson asked if different sources of chloride, such as road salt, water softeners, or other applications will be identified in the study. Ms. Herrick responded that the impact of different sources of chloride on waterways will be identified in the study.

Ms. Brown-Martin inquired if data is available in areas with concentrations of low-income households. Mr. Muhs responded that monitoring stations were located in Lincoln Creek, the Menomonee River, and Honey Creek. Ms. Brown-Martin noted that those areas make sense for the stream monitoring and further suggested that the report provide information to communities of color.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Herrick stated that ice does not include very much chloride because only the water freezes and not the chloride that may have been in the water.

Planning and Research Committee Meeting  
November 9, 2021

Mr. Nelson commented that the health of the Des Plaines River and the Pike River are concerns in Kenosha County.

Regarding a discussion about the salt providers, Mr. Johnson stated that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation uses statewide bids that are run through the Central Office.

Mr. Schleif suggested that staff contact the Highway Commissioners in each County as they are aware of the amount of salt the townships are using.

Mr. Stroik inquired if treated wastewater could be desalinated. Ms. Herrick responded that it would be very costly.

Mr. Stroik then inquired whether municipal wastewater treatment plants could do a more efficient job of softening the water than the household water softeners. Mr. Muhs responded that there have been advancements in conditioning technology that may reduce the need to use salt in household water softeners.

Mr. Schleif commented that chloride output from the Slinger wastewater treatment plant seems to be very high. Ms. Herrick stated that this may be due to older household water softening systems, and she will reach out to Slinger to confirm this.

Ms. Knipper stated that Walworth County is very interested in the data and asked when data can be provided to the County. Mr. Muhs stated this project is anticipated to be completed in 2024.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Planning and Research Committee is tentatively scheduled for February 15, 2022.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Muhs stated there was no correspondence.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Schleif, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Muhs  
Deputy Secretary

KJM/BRM/EAL/cp  
#259989