

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

1:30 p.m.

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53187

Meeting Occurred Virtually via Video and Telephone Conference

Present:

Commissioners:

Jeffery Schleif, Committee Vice Chair
Charles Colman
Paul Decker
John Holloway
Dewayne Johnson
Katrina Hanson
Brian Holt
Amy Maurer
Joe Messinger
Natalia Minkel-Dumit
Robert Pitts
David Stroik
Donald Trottier

Excused:

Priscilla Coggs-Jones
Michael Crowley
Trevor Jung
Tom Kramer
Eric Stelter

Staff:

Ben McKay
Elizabeth Larsen
Tom Slawski
Zachary Kron

Deputy Director
Director of Administration
Chief Specialist-Biologist
Senior Specialist-Biologist

Guests:

Chandra Staples

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors Legislative Assistant

ROLL CALL

Committee Vice Chair Schleif called the Planning and Research Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present. Mr. Schleif indicated for the record that Commissioners Coggs-Jones, Crowley, Jung, Kramer, and Stelter had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 5, 2025, MEETING

Mr. Schleif asked if there were any changes or additions to the August 5, 2025, meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the August 5, 2025, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS PLAN UPDATE RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Schleif asked Mr. Kron to provide an overview of the Regional Natural Areas Plan Update Record of Public Comments. Mr. Kron explained that two virtual public meetings were held in December 2024 to present the draft plan update. About 37 individuals participated and 25 comments were received. He further explained that the comments were generally supportive of the draft plan update.

There being no questions or comments on a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Pitts, the Regional Natural Areas Plan Update Record of Public Comments was unanimously placed on file by the Committee.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Schleif asked Mr. Slawski to review the Regional Natural Areas Plan Update. Mr. Slawski explained that Chapters 1 through 6 of the plan update were reviewed and approved by the Committee during the February 2025 meeting. He further explained that the rest of the plan update, Chapters 7 through 9, would be reviewed at this meeting. They include:

- Chapter 7, Natural Area Law and Policy
- Chapter 8, Recommended Changes to the Plan
- Chapter 9, Recommended Plan

The following questions and comments were made during the review.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Messinger, Mr. Kron stated that Commission staff have monitored potential changes in State legislation that could be pertinent to the plan update. Ms. Minkel-Dumit suggested creating a table identifying potential funding sources that could help to implement the plan.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Mr. Kron stated that the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program is active; however, it has not yet been reauthorized.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Messinger, Mr. Slawski stated that the Natural Areas Explorer Webtool can be a new method for conducting outreach to State elected officials. Mr. Messinger suggested that conducting outreach to State elected officials regarding the plan update should be a priority.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Holt, Mr. Slawski stated that Commission staff can update the webtool when requested by individuals such as landowners or County and local conservation staff.

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In response to an inquiry by Mr. Schleif, Mr. McKay stated that the Commission staff provide comments to the Public Service Commission during the environmental impact statement scoping phase of a proposed project regarding the project's relation to regional plan recommendations. The comments are typically focused on a project's impact on environmental corridors, natural areas, and critical species habitat sites.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Johnson, Mr. McKay stated that the Environmental Division staff has been successful in receiving grants to fund some of the cost of the plan update as well as plan implementation activities.

Mr. Decker suggested that the Commission continue to increase focus on concise regional plans with a web presence that are easy for elected officials and the public to understand.

Ms. Minkel-Dumit suggested exploring whether hyperlinks could be added to the site profiles on the webtool to organization websites, if they exist.

Mr. Decker stated that many of the outreach topics discussed should also be discussed by the Intergovernmental and Public Relations Committee.

There being no further questions or comments on a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Pitts, the Regional Natural Areas Plan Update was unanimously recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Commission.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Schleif stated that the next meeting of the Planning and Research Committee is tentatively scheduled for February 3, 2026.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Schleif asked Mr. McKay if there were any correspondence or announcements. Mr. McKay announced that the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for November 20 and the next Quarterly Commission meeting will be held on December 3 at a location in Milwaukee County. Mr. McKay also noted that the Commission staff is working on several research papers that will support the next major update of the regional land use and transportation plan. He stated one of the topics will be data centers.

Commissioner Stroik commented about Washington County and stated the topic should be on an Executive Committee meeting agenda as soon as possible and the December Quarterly Commission meeting agenda. A discussion ensued, concluded by Commissioner Decker raising a point of order.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Schleif, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker
Executive Director