

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR
A PROSPECTUS FOR A REGIONAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

DATE: February 13, 2026

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

TEAMS LINK:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/24105201930832?p=qjf8v0pu49LDJfBWA>

Meeting ID: 241 052 019 308 32

Passcode: Gj3rn2ow

Members Present

Laura K. Herrick, Secretary Chief Environmental Engineer, SEWRPC
Kevin Berg Engineering Services Director, Walworth County Metropolitan Sewerage District
Mandy Bonneville Deputy Director/County Conservationist, Walworth County
Land and Resource Management Department
Gavin Dehnert Emerging Contaminants Scientist, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute
Tim Detzer Principal Environmental Engineer/County Conservationist,
Milwaukee County Environmental Services
Matt Diebel Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey
Jacob Fincher Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc.
Dave Giordano Executive Director, Root Pike Watershed Initiative Network
Elizabeth Hellman Water Quality Compliance and Lab Services Manager, WEC Energy Group
Anthony Jazdzyk Sanitary and Stormwater Permit Compliance Manager, City of Milwaukee
Max Marechal City Engineer, Engineering Department, City of West Bend
Janette Marsh Nonpoint Source Technical Program Manager States and Tribes,
Water Division U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5
Katie Praedel Field Integration Leader, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Tim Reel Operations Manager and Employee Safety Director,
City of Oconomowoc, Wastewater Treatment Utility
Mark Riedel Total Maximum Daily Load Manager,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Rachel Sabre Water Resources Management Specialist,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Chad Sampson Land Resources Manager, Racine County Land and Water Conservation
Kevin Shafer Executive Director, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Chelsea Snowden-Smith Stormwater Utility Engineering Technician, City of Kenosha
Andrew Struck Director, Planning and Parks Department, Ozaukee County
Paul Tollard County Conservationist, Kenosha County
Katie Vogeler Director, Land and Water Management, Ozaukee County
Ryan Wallin Restoration and Stewardship Director, Restoring Lands

Staff Present

Benjamin R. McKay Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Emily E. Porter..... Planner, SEWRPC
Thomas M. Slawski Chief Biologist, SEWRPC

[Secretary’s Note: The agenda for this meeting is attached herein as Exhibit A.]

CALL TO ORDER

The February 13, 2026 meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for *A Prospectus for a Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update* was convened online at 10:02 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Committee Secretary Ms. Laura Herrick, Chief Engineer with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Attendance was taken using the online software.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Herrick welcomed the attendees to the second TAC meeting for a *Prospectus for a Regional Water Quality Management Plan* and noted the addition of four new TAC members. Ms. Herrick asked the TAC for any comments or edits for the Summary Notes from the November 21, 2025, TAC meeting. The previous meeting reviewed the history of the Regional Water Quality Management Plan (RWQMP) and introduced the purpose and scope of the RWQMP update Prospectus document. TAC members offered no questions or comments on the Summary Notes.

Ms. Herrick introduced the agenda for the meeting to provide an overview of the history of water quality management planning in the Region and to discuss the scope of the assessments and inventories to be included in the Prospectus. She also explained where to find information for the Prospectus effort, directing the TAC to the Regional Planning tab on the Commission’s website (www.sewrpc.org). Past meeting agendas, summary notes and the committee member list can be viewed on the Water Quality page. This page will also house up-to-date information about the Prospectus effort and future draft documents.

Ms. Herrick briefly reviewed the history of water quality planning in the Region and explained that the RWQMP serves as the foundation for all of the Commission’s environmental, water quality, sewage treatment, and sanitary sewer planning work. She showed a timeline of water quality management in the Region, highlighting the completion of SEWRPC Planning Report No. 30, *A Regional Water Quality Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin* (PR-30) in 1979 and the major partial update to the RWQMP in 2007 (SEWRPC Planning Report No. 50, *A Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update for the Greater Milwaukee Watersheds*). Ms. Herrick explained that the current effort to develop a Prospectus for a Regional Water Quality Management Plan update is the first comprehensive update to the Plan since the 1970s. She noted that the aim of the Prospectus is to identify a workplan for the update to support the goal of “fishable and swimmable” waters for the entire seven county Region.

Ms. Herrick asked the TAC if they had any thoughts or questions about the history of the RWQMP or the purpose of the Prospectus. Hearing none, she introduced Ms. Porter, Water Resources Planner with the Commission, to lead the water quality portion of the Prospectus scope discussion.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

Streams and Lakes

Ms. Porter began the Prospectus scope discussion by highlighting the water quality assessments and inventories to be included in the RWQMP update. She explained that Commission staff identified specific waterbodies and priority water quality constituents and requested feedback from the TAC on the streams, lakes and water quality constituents selected.

Ms. Porter first reviewed the streams selected for the water quality assessments, explaining how major and minor streams were chosen for each watershed. To limit the number of streams included in the RWQMP update, Commission staff selected primary flow perennial streams, streams receiving wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) discharge, streams with abandoned or planned WWTPs, and regionally significant streams with water quality data. Ms. Snowden-Smith asked if major industrial outfalls would be captured by these streams, noting that the City of Kenosha has the locations for these outfalls in their municipality. Ms. Herrick responded that this would be something that the Commission staff will explore further and thanked her for the comment.

Mr. Riedel asked if proposed locations for data centers and the influence of data centers on surface waters and groundwater was going to be considered in the RWQMP update. Mr. McKay responded that the Commission is considering the impact of data centers on Regional planning as part of the Vision 2050 Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan. Ms. Praedel added that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ongoing data center research that could be dovetailed with the Vision 2050 effort as well.

Mr. Berg asked if watercourses with approved or pending total maximum daily load (TMDL) allocations could be included in the major stream figures. Ms. Porter and Ms. Herrick agreed that streams with TMDLs should be captured in the RWQMP update assessments. Mr. Reel suggested that controlled animal feeding operations (CAFOs) also be considered for identifying major stream reaches. Ms. Herrick thanked him for the recommendation and Ms. Porter added that CAFOs will be considered in future pollution discussions.

Ms. Porter continued the presentation by showing a series of maps with selected streams in each of the Region's watersheds. She asked the TAC to suggest any streams that they feel are missing that should be included in future water quality assessments. Mr. Detzer suggested the addition of the Michell Field Drainage Ditch in the Oak Creek Watershed. Mr. Struck added that Mole Creek would be beneficial to include for the Milwaukee River Watershed, as it is designated as a cool coldwater stream, as well as Pigeon Creek. Mr. Fincher mentioned that highlighting coldwater streams would be helpful and suggested the addition of Nichols Creek. Lastly, Mr. Giordano suggested adding Klema Ditch in Racine County.

Ms. Snowden-Smith asked if a review of storm sewer systems that may cross the Lake Michigan divide was going to be done. She indicated that this occurs in spots along the eastern side of the Des Plaines watershed and may occur elsewhere. Mr. Berg asked if the full extent of the Delavan Lake chain be addressed. Ms. Herrick thanked them both for the comments and added that Commission staff will look into their questions. Mr. Shafer asked about the purpose of showing streams with abandoned WWTPs. Ms. Porter explained that planned and abandoned WWTPs were included to assess conditions prior to and following abandonment or addition, where possible. She clarified that if there is not enough water quality data to assess these streams, they will not be evaluated. Mr. Shafer also pointed out that there appeared to be a Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District WWTP missing from the streams maps. Ms. Herrick suspected that points on the map may be overlapping at the current map scale but noted that Commission staff would make sure that both the MMSD plants are included.

Ms. Porter next introduced the draft list of priority water quality constituents to be assessed in streams for the RWQMP update. Ms. Porter asked the TAC for their thoughts and suggestions regarding water quality assessment constituents. Constituents selected by Commission staff included nitrogen, phosphorus, temperature, chlorides, total suspended solids/sediments, metals (including zinc as an indicator of tire particle pollution), emerging contaminants where data is available (neonicotinoids, pharmaceuticals, and microplastics), and macroinvertebrate HBI and fish IBI scores. Ms. Porter then showed preliminary figures that displayed total phosphorus and temperature trends at select stream monitoring sites to illustrate possible water quality analyses to be included in the RWQMP update.

Ms. Snowden-Smith inquired about including the presence of invasive flora and fauna in stream water quality assessments. Mr. Wallin seconded this consideration and mentioned that invasive species inventories would be particularly useful for streams where invasive species may dominate due to highly developed landscapes or conventional agriculture. He added that Milwaukee Parks might have good existing data for the Area of Concern (AOC) streams. Ms. Porter agreed that invasive species would be beneficial to inventory and thanked them for their suggestions.

Mr. Struck asked if any consideration had been given to flow and temperature measurements in the major streams. Ms. Herrick responded that the intention for the RWQMP update is to use available data and to not carry out any additional field data collection unless necessary. Mr. Riedel mentioned that Weighted Regressions on Time, Discharge and Season (WRTDS) may provide a useful tool. He offered to help identify where WRTDS or other statistical methods would be appropriate for the RWQMP update. No further comments on the stream water quality inventories were provided by the TAC.

Ms. Porter next introduced the inland lake water quality assessments proposed to be included in the RWQMP update. She explained that all southeastern Wisconsin inland lakes with available water quality data would be included in the inventories, noting that the majority of available data were collected on large or two-story lakes. She added that including all inland lakes in the RWQMP update would allow Commission staff to identify smaller, yet Regionally significant lakes that lack monitoring data and to make future monitoring recommendations for specific lakes or water quality parameters. Ms. Porter provided a list of possible water quality constituents to assess lake water quality, including nitrogen, phosphorus, Wisconsin trophic state index (WTSI) values, chlorophyll-*a*, clarity, dissolved oxygen, temperature, chlorides, metals, *E. coli*, emerging contaminants (where available), and aquatic vegetation.

Ms. Snowden-Smith asked if the lake inventories would account for potential treatments for invasive plants and algae and noted that there are ponds with high copper levels in the City of Kenosha's water quality testing. Mr. Riedel added that lake ice on and ice off dates are tracked by the Wisconsin DNR and would be beneficial to consider as well in the RWQMP update. No further comments on the lake water quality inventories were provided by the TAC.

Lake Michigan and Groundwater

Ms. Herrick continued the presentation and scope discussion by introducing the draft Lake Michigan water quality assessments to be included in the Prospectus and RWQMP update. She explained that the RWQMP update will address main lake nutrient, temperature and chloride conditions in Lake Michigan. This means that no water quality inventories will be done for the harbors in the Region. Mr. Struck suggested that there may be more recent Lake Michigan monitoring per the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) under the newly designated Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary. In addition, Mr. Fincher offered to connect Commission staff with the University of Wisconsin School of Freshwater Sciences Buoy Department for potential additional Lake Michigan data. Mr. Diebel suggested including Cladophora data from nearshore areas of Lake Michigan and that Harvey Bootsma at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee would be a good contact for this data. Lastly, Mr. Riedel offered to reach out to the

AOC staff for additional feedback on the proposed Lake Michigan water quality data. No further comments on Lake Michigan water quality inventories were provided by the TAC.

Ms. Herrick next presented the proposed groundwater assessments to be included in the Prospectus scope. She noted that Dr. Swanson with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey provided feedback before the meeting on the proposed method and constituents for assessing groundwater. To assess long-term trends in groundwater quality the use of existing municipal well datasets was proposed. Ms. Herrick listed iron, manganese, arsenic, nitrate, chloride, PFAS, sodium, and radium as the water quality constituents selected for the groundwater assessments. There were no comments or suggestions from the TAC regarding the groundwater quality inventories.

Additional Water Quality Inventories

Ms. Herrick next requested the TAC input on including a connectivity and fish passage inventory in the RWQMP update effort. She clarified that this inventory would entail crossings on major streams only and use readily available inventory data from throughout the Region. Several members of the TAC expressed support for including connectivity and fish passage inventories in the scope. Mr. Struck said that Ozaukee County would share their fish passage inventory with the Commission and Mr. Giordano said that the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network would also share their existing inventory data. Ms. Sabre thought that it may be possible to use lidar to identify fish passage issues. Mr. Diebel added that Milwaukee Riverkeeper also has some existing fish passage data for the Menomonee River. No further comments on the fish passage inventory were provided by the TAC.

Ms. Herrick concluded the water quality scope discussion by outlining additional major inventories to be incorporated into the RWQMP update. These inventories will include updating Regional maps related to land use, environmental corridors, hydric soils, existing and potentially restorable wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and steep slopes. The map inventories will also include coarse riparian buffers, depth to groundwater, and agricultural practices throughout the Region.

Ms. Herrick invited feedback from the TAC regarding the proposed inventories and specifically requested guidance for the development of a Regional drain tile inventory. Mr. Struck noted that an agricultural drain tile map is available for the Town of Grafton, but that drain tile information is limited countywide in Ozaukee County. Ms. Snowden-Smith shared that the City of Kenosha has some drain tile information that could be made available, and Mr. Sampson added that the Racine County Drainage Board maintains maps of all large, main tiles.

Mr. Tollard commented that while a more comprehensive drain tile map and inventory would be beneficial, it would be challenging to develop due to the scattered and inconsistent nature of existing data. Mr. Struck agreed, noting that Ozaukee County has attempted some mapping efforts, but the inventory remains largely incomplete. Mr. Giordano mentioned that the Root-Pike WIN has parcel-specific drain tile information for the Pike River. Mr. Diebel shared a national map of tile drainage based on soils and land cover data that could serve as a useful resource for this inventory (see Shared Links and Resources section). Mr. Riedel added that drain tiles can be a source of nitrates and dissolved reactive phosphorus and that information about the location of tiles would be useful from a water quality perspective. He also suggested the possibility of using satellite and infrared imagery for tile identification.

Mr. Fincher noted that a comprehensive map of built stormwater BMPs would be a dream. Ms. Snowden-Smith added that the City of Kenosha has a good amount of data on BMPs that could be shared. Ms. Herrick commented that the Commission has discussed the need for a stormwater BMP inventory for the Region, but this has been difficult to compile even at the watershed or subwatershed scale for past plans. No further comments on the water quality inventories to be included in the RWQMP update were provided by the TAC.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT INVENTORIES

Following the water quality scope discussion, Ms. Herrick next presented the wastewater treatment inventories proposed for the RWQMP update. She noted that the purpose of the wastewater inventories are to assess current WWTP capabilities and current discharge impacts to the environment, review current sanitary area planning processes, and assess the need for regionalization or establishing new plants. WWTP inventories would include collecting data on plant size, discharge, processes, variances and sludge management methods. The proposed WWTP discharge water quality indicators to be inventoried include discharge BOD₅, TSS, chlorides, phosphorus, pH and *E. coli*.

Mr. Reel requested incorporating United States Geological Survey (USGS) stream gage data into the WWTP inventories and informed that TAC that PFAS testing in WWTP effluent will be required in future permits. Mr. Berg suggested that a subset of WWTP regionalization considerations be for biosolids only while keeping liquid trains in current locations. Mr. Reel seconded Mr. Berg's recommendation.

Ms. Herrick next identified additional priority wastewater treatment inventories to be included in the RWQMP update, such as a summary of the methods used by WWTPs in the Region to meet nutrient limits and an inventory of private septic systems. Ms. Herrick provided a list of WWTPs in the Region using adaptive management and water quality trading to offset their phosphorus discharge limits. Ms. Vogeler added that the City of Cedarburg also has an Adaptive Management Plan, as it was not included in the WDNR listing online. Mr. Tollard felt that multi discharger variances should be reflected in phosphorus discharge offsets and asked how they will be included in the RWQMP update inventories. Mr. Riedel offered to coordinate with Commission staff on behalf of the Wisconsin DNR to assess phosphorus offsets.

Mr. Berg indicated that in the Region there are private sanitary sewer systems that discharge to a public system and suggested these private systems be identified. He noted that this scenario applies specifically to WalCoMet but may be the case elsewhere as well. Ms. Herrick responded that the intention was to inventory the private systems that do not directly connect to public systems in the RWQMP update inventory. Mr. Reel commented that development cost is a prohibiting factor and that it is more economical for new development to be built with septic systems and wells than to connect to public systems, adding that this will pose an ongoing challenge to expanding public water and wastewater service.

Ms. Herrick concluded the Prospectus scope discussion by describing the draft sanitary sewer service area (SSSA) inventories to include in the RWQMP update. She explained that the Commission will review the status of SSSA planning and intends to update primary environmental corridors, secondary environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas to the latest SEWRPC inventory (currently 2020) for all communities as part of the RWQMP update. In addition, a review will be conducted of the sanitary sewer extension review process and clarify how impacts to steep slopes, environmental corridors, and private sanitary sewers will be reviewed. Mr. Reel commented that it would be nice to recommend in the RWQMP update to phase out septic systems and holding tanks in environmental corridors.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE PROSPECTUS

Ms. Herrick closed the meeting by sharing next steps in the Prospectus effort. She noted that there are planned to be three additional meetings in 2026. The Prospectus is slated to be completed in December 2026. Ms. Herrick informed the TAC that scope discussions will continue during the next meeting and that future topics will include a review of major sources of pollution and recommendations for a path forward. She reminded the committee that meeting agendas, presentations, and summary notes along with the draft prospectus text will be posted on the Water Quality page of the SEWRPC website at www.sewrpc.org/Regional-Planning/Water-Quality.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Herrick
Recording Secretary

Links and Resources Shared

Mr. Diebel shared the following paper with a national map of tile drainage based on soils and land cover:

www.nature.com/articles/s41597-020-00596-x

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Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Notice of Meeting and Agenda

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR

A PROSPECTUS FOR A REGIONAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2026

TIME: 10 am - Noon

TEAMS LINK:

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Meeting ID: 241 052 019 308 32

Passcode: Gj3rn2ow

AGENDA:

1. Introductions
2. Review November 12, 2025 TAC Meeting Summary Notes
3. Brief Overview of Regional Water Quality Management Plan History
4. Prospectus Scope Content Discussion – Plan Priorities and Desired Outcomes
 - a. Assessments and Inventories
 - i. Water Quality
 - ii. Wastewater Treatment Plants and Sewer Service Areas
5. Next Steps
6. Adjourn