Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the

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

DATE: September 11, 2026

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Members Present

Laura K. Herrick, Secretary ..... Chief Environmental Engineer, SEWRPC
Alan Barrows..... Land Resources Manager, Waukesha County
Mandy Bonneville .....Deputy Director/County Conservationist, Walworth County Land and Resource Management Department
Tim Detzer .....Principal Environmental Engineer/County Conservationist, Milwaukee County Environmental Services
Jacob Fincher ..... Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc.
Elizabeth Hellman..... Water Quality Compliance and Lab Services Manager, WEC Energy Group
Anthony Jazdzyk.....Sanitary and Stormwater Permit Compliance Manager, City of Milwaukee
Kevin Kirsch .....Water Resource Engineer, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Aliyah Kousheh ..... Water Engineer-in-Training, Kenosha Water Utility
Max Marechal ..... City Engineer, City of West Bend
Janette Marsh .....Nonpoint Source Technical Program Manager States and Tribes, Water Division U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5
Cheryl Nenn ..... Riverkeeper, Milwaukee Riverkeeper
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
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
Sue Swanson. ..... Director and State Geologist, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
Nate Tillis .....Wastewater Utility Executive Director, Racine Water and Wastewater Utility

Staff Present

Emily E. Porter.....Planner, SEWRPC
Aaron W. Owens.....Principal Planner, SEWRPC

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

CALL TO ORDER

The September 11, 2026 meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for *A Prospectus for a Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update* (RWQMPU) was convened online at 10:03 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Committee Secretary Ms. Laura Herrick, Chief Environmental Engineer with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Attendance was taken using the online software.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Herrick welcomed the attendees to the fourth TAC meeting for a *Prospectus for a Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update.* Ms. Herrick then introduced the agenda for the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the first four chapters of the draft Prospectus document. She reminded the TAC that the Commission plans to share to final Prospectus with counties when pursuing funding for the Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update (RWQMPU). She also shared where to find information about 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 all draft documents.

Ms. Herrick next provided a brief review of the content discussed during the TAC meeting on May 8, 2026, and asked the committee for any comments or edits to the May Summary Notes. TAC members offered no questions or comments on the Summary Notes.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 1, *INTRODUCTION*

Ms. Herrick began with an overview of the contents included in draft Chapter 1 of the Prospectus. She explained that the chapter provides a brief summary of the roles and responsibilities of the Commission and the area it serves as well as the history of the Regional Water Quality Management Plan (RWQMP). She reminded the TAC that the RWQMP was first published in 1979 and serves as the foundation for all of the environmental, water quality, sewage treatment, and sanitary sewer planning work carried out by the Commission.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 2, *PURPOSE OF PROSPECTUS*

Ms. Herrick then introduced draft Chapter 2 of the Prospectus. She noted that the chapter is only two pages in length and describes the overall purpose of the Prospectus document. Ms. Herrick provided a summarized version of the list included in the chapter. She emphasized that the purpose of the Prospectus is to establish the need for an update to the RWQMP, outline the scope and content to be included in the RWQMPU, and describe the work to be completed.

Ms. Herrick asked if the committee had any feedback on the first two Prospectus chapters. The committee provided no questions or comments.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 3, *NEED FOR RWQMPU*

Ms. Porter introduced the contents included in draft Chapter 3 of the Prospectus. She explained that the purpose of the chapter is to establish the need for an update to the RWQMP. Ms. Porter first reviewed the history of water quality planning in the Region, noting that there has not been a Region-wide update to the RWQMP since 1979. She next shared Map 3.1, Table 3.2, and Figures 3.1 and 3.3 from Chapter 3 of the draft Prospectus which highlighted the significant population and land use changes in the Region since the 1960s. She noted that land use areas and percentages shown in Table 3.2 in the presentation had been revised from the table included in the online draft chapter. Ms. Porter then discussed section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act and the various impaired surface waters and beaches identified in the Region since the 1970s (Table 3.3). She explained that the 303(d) list is updated every two years by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), but many waters in the Region have not been monitored or reassessed in recent years.

Ms. Porter then showed a series of figures from Chapter 3 that summarize commonly monitored water quality parameters in streams and lakes throughout the Region and explained that historical and recent trends in water quality vary based on a waterbody's size, location, history, and type. She added that many lakes and streams have little or no monitoring data and subsequently have unknown water quality conditions. Ms. Porter next emphasized the importance of including a review of historical and recent groundwater conditions in the RWQMPU, noting rising levels of chlorides, nitrate, PFAS, and pesticides/herbicides in shallow wells as well as radium in deep wells throughout the Region. Finally, Ms. Porter discussed the need for reviewing trends in emerging contaminants and the value of assessing the impacts of increased precipitation and higher temperatures in the Region on both surface water and groundwater.

Ms. Herick concluded the review of Chapter 3 by summarizing the status of wastewater treatment in the Region. She explained that the chapter emphasizes the need for updated wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) inventories to evaluate current treatment capabilities and facility needs, assess the environmental impacts of the plants, and identify opportunities for further plant consolidation or development. Ms. Herrick added that there is also a need for assessing how communities are utilizing programs such as water quality trading, adaptive management, and the multi-discharger variance and the effectiveness of these programs.

Ms. Herrick asked the TAC if they had any questions on the content included in Chapter 3. The Committee members offered no comments or questions.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 4, *WORK PROGRAM* (INVENTORIES PART)

Water Quality Inventories

Ms. Porter introduced Chapter 4 of the Prospectus and explained that the presentation would cover the major components of the proposed RWQMPU and the scope of the work to be completed. She added that Commission staff would only be discussing Section 4.2 (*Inventories and Assessments*) during the meeting and that the next TAC meeting would focus on Section 4.3 (*Sources of Pollution*) as well as Section 4.4 (*Plan Outcomes and Management Recommendations*). Ms. Porter first reviewed the proposed RWQMPU project area and the surface water quality inventories and assessments that would be included in the Plan update. She explained that the inventories and assessments would prioritize commonly monitored chemical and physical parameters and allow Commission staff to compare conditions to water quality criteria and designated uses. Ms. Porter also explained that assessments of current and historical trends would provide insight into long-term patterns affecting the Region and indicate both exceptional waters and those in need of improvement. She then shared Map 4.2 displaying the streams selected for the RWQMPU and Table 4.1 showing the surface water quality parameters proposed to be included in the inventories.

Ms. Marsh suggested that the Prospectus explain how "waters in need of improvement" would be defined. She proposed referencing the USEPA Healthy Watersheds guide to identify waterbodies to protect from further degradation. Mr. Kirsch agreed, noting that the 303(d) list only includes waterbodies that clearly exceed water quality criteria, but that the listing process provides a gradient of waters in need of improvement that do not meet the threshold for impairment. He suggested that the Commission use the Wisconsin Consolidation Assessment and Listing Methodology (WisCALM) guidance document to identify waters that fall within this gray zone.

Ms. Nenn noted that Table 4.1 in the draft Prospectus did not include *E. coli* concentrations as a water quality parameter to be evaluated in streams. She suggested that *E. coli* be added to the constituent list and noted that the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) and wastewater treatments plants in the Region monitor *E. coli*. Mr. Detzer mentioned that MS4 communities also measure *E. coli*. Ms. Herrick agreed and said that *E. coli* can be added as a stream water quality parameter.

Ms. Snowden-Smith inquired about the lack of biological parameters listed in Table 4.1 for Lake Michigan, specifically suggesting invasive species and bacterial indicators be added. Ms. Herick responded that SEWRPC can explore available invasive species data for Lake Michigan. Ms. Porter agreed that *E. coli* levels could also be added as a biological parameter to the Lake Michigan water quality inventory, noting that there is available *E. coli* data for many Lake Michigan beaches. Mr. Detzer also agreed that it would be beneficial to assess Lake Michigan *E. coli* concentrations, as there are currently Lake Michigan beaches on the 303(d) list due to their high *E. coli* levels.

Next, Ms. Porter provided a brief overview of the groundwater quality assessments that would be included in the proposed RWQMPU. Ms. Swanson noted that USGS will be updating the State groundwater recharge and depth to groundwater maps within the next two years. She said that new state-wide water table maps will be finished at the end of 2027 or early 2028 and would serve as a good reference for the RWQMPU.

Wastewater Inventories

Ms. Herrick then introduced the wastewater treatment inventories. She described that the proposed RWQMPU would include a review of current wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) locations, practices, and technologies and explained that the inventories would make use of WDNR WWTP databases and interviews conducted with plant operators. She also identified the various discharge pollutants that the RWQMPU would evaluate.

Mr. Reel suggested that a list of questions or the types of information needed be provided to plant operators prior to the interviews. Mr. Tillis seconded Mr. Reel's suggestion. Ms. Herrick agreed and said that Commission staff will provide this information to the WWTP operators in advance. Mr. Riedel suggested that Commission staff coordinate with regional wastewater staff and the WDNR wastewater database (known as SWAMP) to avoid duplication of efforts and to help guide specific discussion questions for interviews with plant operators.

Additional Inventories

Mr. Herrick identified additional inventories to be included in the proposed RWQMPU including general land use inventories, stream connectivity and fish passage inventories, and a review of environmental corridors, natural areas, and steep slopes in the Region. Mr. Riedel asked if mapping of sensitive areas (environmental corridors and natural areas) would include internally drained areas. He noted that the Dane County Watershed Division recently saw profound implications when internally drained areas were included in their mapping efforts for sensitive areas. Mr. Riedel offered to share contact information for this Dane County study. Ms. Herrick noted that the identification of internally drained areas has been done by the Commission for past smaller planning efforts, but it was done by hand and was very labor intensive. She indicated that the Commission will explore what Dane County did, and see if available GIS tools may allow an internally drained delineation Regionwide.

Next, Ms. Porter described the riparian buffer analysis work to be completed for the proposed RWQMPU. She explained that these analyses would allow Commission staff to estimate the percentage of waterbodies protected by buffers and determine the relative amounts of riparian buffer areas not currently protected by public ownership, environmental corridors, or floodplain designations. Ms. Porter then reviewed the inventories assessing existing and potentially restorable wetlands, hydric soils, groundwater recharge areas, and depth to groundwater that would also be included in the proposed RWQMPU. She added that Commission staff will update the Chapter 4 draft text to include how the upcoming groundwater inventories recommended earlier by Ms. Swanson may be used in the RWQMPU.

Mr. Porter then described how Commission staff would partner with county conservationists in the Region to complete a generalized agricultural practices inventory for the proposed RWQMPU. She explained that this inventory would provide insights into the percentage of land in nutrient management planning, the distribution of various crop types, the presence and location of controlled animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and the extent of best management practices implemented in the Region.

Ms. Porter also provided a brief overview of how the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) data would be used to assess impacts of long-term weather trends on water quality in the proposed RWQMPU. She noted that air temperature, annual and seasonal precipitation, and storm intensity data would be included as climatological inventories as well as ice on and ice off data for inland lakes where available.

Ms. Herrick concluded the Chapter 4 discussion with a review of the sanitary sewer service area inventories that would be included in the proposed RWQMPU. She explained that the update would include an inventory of the currently served sanitary sewer service areas. This inventory would use data provided by communities to produce maps that delineate the areas currently served and to generate a foundational dataset that could be used to inform future WWTP limitations and extension decisions.

No further comments or questions were provided by the TAC for the Chapter 4 inventories.

NEXT STEPS

Finally, Ms. Herrick reviewed the next steps for the Prospectus effort. She explained that there will be one additional TAC meeting in November that will focus on the remaining chapters of the Prospectus. The meeting will review the final sections of Chapter 4 (*Sources of Pollution* and *Plan Outcomes and Recommendations*) as well as Chapter 5 (*RWQMPU Budget and Timeline*). Ms. Herrick then reminded the TAC 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 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Herrick
Recording Secretary

COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE MEETING

After the meeting, Mr. Fincher provided additional suggestions for the Prospectus in an email to Commission staff. Mr. Fincher mentioned that, from Sweet Water's perspective, an interesting outcome of the update would be the opportunity to help municipalities and counties translate RWQMPU findings into practical implementation decisions. He noted that this would be particularly helpful during MS4 permit reissuance and long-term planning efforts. He added that communities know their local conditions, challenges, and opportunities the best, but that they don't always have the capacity to turn plans into implementation strategies. Mr. Fincher said that the RWQMPU may provide a real opportunity to bridge the gap between the science and on-the-ground implementation, helping communities identify practical actions that advance both permit goals and water quality outcomes. Sweet Water would be supportive of efforts that help connect those findings to local decision-making and implementation.

Following the meeting, Ms. Snowden-Smith also shared the contact information for Scott McComb, the Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach Specialist with the Wisconsin Sea Grant. In an email, Ms. Snowden-Smith noted that she discussed the RWQMPU Prospectus effort with Mr. McComb and shared their correspondence. She noted that Mr. McComb would be a great resource for the aquatic invasive species portion of the RWQMPU.

On October 1, Commission staff followed up with Mr. Riedel for information regarding the mapping of internally drained areas in Dane County. He provide contact information for Dane County staff and provided additional context for the recommendation he made during the September TAC meeting. Mr. Riedel noted that his comment was specifically related to the fact that internally drained features, especially in areas that can have shallow groundwater, karst, and fen connections, can be vulnerable to polluted runoff from both point and nonpoint sources. Commission staff will explore the feasibility of mapping these internally drained areas, however, this effort may not be possible on a regional scale for the RWQMPU. In this case, internally drained features in sensitive areas will be identified generally as areas in need of protection within RWQMPU recommendations.

Finally, after the TAC Meeting, Ms. Porter reached out to Mr. Sampson to inquire about the types of information that county conservationists collect and maintain on CAFOs and smaller animal feeding operations. For the RWQMPU, the Commission plans to work with county conservationists to complete an inventory of agricultural practices in the Region. As part of this effort, Commission staff will estimate the presence and concentration of CAFOS and identify where farms are land applying manure in each watershed. In addition to designated CAFOS, there are many large farms that do not meet the definition of a CAFO that may also be land spreading manure. Ms. Porter asked Mr. Sampson to share his thoughts on the feasibility of including smaller farms in the inventory. Mr. Sampson shared a list of larger livestock operations in Racine County with parcel information and data on the number and type of animals at each farm. He also noted that the racinecounty.gov website has a GIS mapping tool that can be used to locate parcels where manure is spread. If other counties maintain similar information on non-CAFO livestock operations, Commission staff feel that including an inventory of these smaller farms would be beneficial for the RWQMPU.

LINKS AND RESOURCES SHARED

Mr. Reidel shared the following link to the WDNR WisCALM document:
https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/WisCALM.html

Mr. Reidel shared the following link to the WDNR Healthy Watersheds, High-Quality Waters webpage:
https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/WisCALM.html

00281993.DOCX – Summary Notes – RWQMPU Prospectus TAC Meeting – September 11, 2026
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9/16/26

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, September 11, 2026

TIME: 10 – 11:30 am

TEAMS LINK:

Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/227469323496040?p=7i8Yo1Ejl3J9wDRkbq

Meeting ID: 227 469 323 496 040

Passcode: 48w76qU6

AGENDA:

1. Review May 8, 2026 TAC Meeting Summary Notes
2. Prospectus Draft Chapter Review
    a. Chapter 1 - Introduction
    b. Chapter 2 - Purpose of Prospectus
    c. Chapter 3 - Needs for RWQMP Update
    d. Chapter 4 - Work Program (Inventories part)
3. Next Steps
4. Adjourn

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