

**SUMMARY NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2020 MEETING OF THE  
OAK CREEK WATERSHED RESTORATION PLAN ADVISORY GROUP**

**INTRODUCTION**

Because of the COVID-19 safety protocols, the November 17, 2020 meeting of the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan Advisory Group was held virtually via GoToMeeting. The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Laura Herrick, Chief Environmental Engineer, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). Attendance was noted by SEWRPC staff via the GoToMeeting participant listing.

In attendance at the meeting were the following individuals:

**Advisory Group Members Present**

- Robert Anderson .....Professor of Biological Sciences, Wisconsin Lutheran College
- Philip Beiermeister ..... Environmental Engineer, City of Oak Creek
- Benjamin Benninghoff ..... Natural Resources Basin Supervisor, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Greg Failey ..... Environmental Manager, Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport
- Jacob Fincher.....Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trusts, Inc.
- Dave Giordano.....Executive Director, Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network
- Craig Helker .....Water Resources Management Specialist,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Laura Herrick, Secretary .....Chief Environmental Engineer, SEWRPC
- Stevan Keith..... Principal Environmental Engineer, Milwaukee County Environmental Services
- Julie Kinzelman .....Director, Laboratory Division & Research Scientist,  
City of Racine Public Health Department
- Janette Marsh..... Nonpoint Source Technical Program Manager,  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
- Glen Morrow ..... City Engineer/Director of Public Works, City of Franklin
- Cheryl Nenn .....Riverkeeper, Milwaukee Riverkeeper
- Brian Russart..... Natural Areas Coordinator, Milwaukee County Parks
- Tom Slawski ..... Chief Biologist, SEWRPC
- Kyle Vandercar.....City Engineer, City of South Milwaukee
- Jennifer Wright .....Watercourse Section Manager, Engineering Department  
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

**Guests and Staff Present**

- Megan Beauchaine .....Planner, SEWRPC
- Joseph Boxhorn.....Principal Planner, SEWRPC
- Erik Brooks.....Mayor, City of South Milwaukee
- Stacy Hron .....Water Resources Management Specialist,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Mark Mittag .....Senior Project Manager, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Aaron Owens..... Senior Planner, SEWRPC
- Katlyn Plier ..... Restoration Ecologist, Milwaukee County Parks
- Robert Seleen.....Floodplain Hazard Mitigation Manager, City of Milwaukee
- Guy Smith .....Deputy Regional Manager,  
Milwaukee County Parks

Kurt Sprangers ..... Civil Engineer, City of Milwaukee  
Jack Sudar ..... Environmental Engineer, Milwaukee County  
Sue Winnen ..... Environmental Engineer, City of Oak Creek

Ms. Herrick welcomed all attendees to the fifth meeting of the Advisory Group for the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (Plan). Ms. Herrick began the meeting with a brief explanation of the GoToMeeting platform and its features. Ms. Herrick then shared her screen to go over the agenda for the meeting, which included review of the summary notes from the June 2020 Advisory Group meeting, review of draft Plan Chapter 5, and discussion of the next steps for the Plan development.

No edits or changes were offered by the attendees for the summary notes from the June 23, 2020 Advisory Group meeting.

## **REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN CHAPTER 5, “WATERSHED GOALS AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES”**

Ms. Herrick began the meeting with a brief overview of Section 5.1 “Introduction”, which included an outline of the chapter material, the goals of the Plan, problems related to each Plan focus area, and the Plan management objectives related to each goal. No comments or questions were presented.

At Ms. Herrick’s request, Mr. Boxhorn began discussion on Section 5.2 “Water Quality,” beginning with a summary of subsection, “Description of Problems Related to Water Quality.” Mr. Boxhorn encouraged attendees to review draft Plan Chapter 4 for more detail related to this topic. There were no comments or questions related to this subsection.

Mr. Boxhorn continued with review of subsection, “Management Objectives for Water Quality.” Mr. Boxhorn noted that with the exception of the first three objectives which are listed in order of priority relative to one another, all objectives are of equal priority. He added that the Water Quality Management Objectives are also listed in Table 5.1. Mr. Keith asked for an example of a non-anthropogenic source that contributes to fecal contamination of nonhuman origin (i.e., the third listed Water Quality Management Objective). Mr. Boxhorn presented “pet waste and dumpsters” as examples of a non-anthropogenic and nonhuman origin. Mr. Keith requested if such a reference(s) could be added in the Plan text, in which Mr. Boxhorn replied that it can be incorporated.

[Secretary’s Note: After the meeting, Mr. Boxhorn added text to the second and third Water Quality Management Objectives. The text in the second objective reads, “Locate and eliminate anthropogenic sources that contribute to fecal contamination of nonhuman origin such as pet wastes, fertilizers, trash, and leaking dumpsters.” The text in the third objective reads, “Locate and eliminate non-anthropogenic sources that contribute fecal contamination of nonhuman origin such as urban wildfire, soils, and decaying organic material.”]

Mr. Boxhorn presented an overview of the subsection, “Targeted Load Reduction Goals.” He explained that estimates of pollutant load reductions needed for total phosphorus, total suspended solids (TSS), fecal coliform bacteria, and total nitrogen used for this Plan were derived from the modeling done for the regional water quality management plan update (RWQMPPU). Mr. Boxhorn noted the modeled urban nonpoint pollutant load reduction targets had to be adjusted due to changes in the application of *Wisconsin*

*Administrative Code* NR 151. He indicated that the adjusted targets are listed in Tables 5.2, 5.4, 5.6, and 5.9. Mr. Benninghoff mentioned municipal separate stormwater sewer systems (MS4s), otherwise known to be urban areas, are considered point sources regulated by Wisconsin's Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit. Mr. Boxhorn replied WPDES permit regulations are described in the Plan; however, apart from certain urban sources, such as a wastewater treatment plant, all urban and nonurban land uses were modeled as nonpoint sources. Regarding NR 151 TSS regulation change, Mr. Benninghoff stated that any communities that had achieved TSS reductions of more than 20 percent by the time the change went into effect were required to maintain those reductions. Mr. Boxhorn replied that this would be added to the chapter.

[Secretary's Note: Concerning Mr. Benninghoff's comments, Mr. Boxhorn added footnote number "13" at the end of the first sentence of the first full paragraph on page 6 of Appendix L explaining that MS4s were modeled as nonpoint sources. Additionally, Mr. Boxhorn added footnote number "14" to the end of the third paragraph on page 7 in Appendix L stating, "2011 Wisconsin Act 32 also required that any reductions of TSS that had already been achieved in areas of existing development had to be retained."]

Mr. Keith asked if examples of modeled "urban" and "other urban" land use categories could be explained in the Plan to help readers distinguish between the two categories. Mr. Boxhorn responded that additional content can potentially be added. Additionally, Mr. Keith asked if an estimate of current loads could be added to the nonpoint pollutant load reduction tables (Tables 5.2, 5.4, 5.6, and 5.9) to help readers understand the load reduction amounts reported in the Plan. Mr. Boxhorn noted the year 2000 nonpoint baseline load reductions are provided in Appendix L. Mr. Keith suggested adding to the nonpoint pollutant load reduction tables as well. Mr. Boxhorn replied that content can be added to the Chapter text.

[Secretary's Note: After the meeting, Mr. Boxhorn added text regarding the existing total load estimates after the second sentence of each targeted reduction subsection.]

Mr. Boxhorn briefly discussed Map 5.1 and water quality conditions that would result from achieving the targeted modeled load reductions. Ms. Nenn asked if Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport was included as a point or nonpoint source during the RWQMPU modeling. Ms. Herrick replied that because the modeling was intended for stormwater, or heavy precipitation events, she believed the Airport was included as a nonpoint source, but she would have to confirm. Mr. Boxhorn mentioned SEWRPC's Technical Report No. 39 lists all the point sources modeled at the time RWQMPU modeling was performed. No additional comments or questions from attendees related to water quality were presented.

[Secretary's Note: After the meeting, Mr. Boxhorn reviewed SEWRPC Technical Report No. 39 and Planning Report No. 50 and found that Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport was modeled as a point source discharger based on a WPDES individual permit and a WPDES general permit for noncontact cooling water for the 440<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Group, which was located on the airport grounds. He further found that it also was modeled as a nonpoint source based on its land use.]

Mr. Owens presented Section 5.3 "Habitat" which included an overview of subsections, "Description of Problems Related to Habitat Conditions" and "Management Objectives for Habitat Quality." No comments or questions were offered on these two subsections.

Ms. Herrick continued with Section 5.4, "Water Quantity," starting with the subsection, "Description of Problems Related to Targeted Stream and Stormwater Flooding." There were no comments or questions on this subsection from the Advisory Group.

Ms. Herrick continued with a brief review of the subsection, "Management Objectives for Targeted Stream and Stormwater Flooding." Mr. Keith noted that a stakeholder comment related to flooding locations near South Milwaukee High School is mapped outside of the floodplain. Ms. Herrick replied that this Section contains problems related to both stormwater and stream flooding events and noted that the site outside of the floodplain was a stormwater related issue. No further comments or questions were made regarding this subsection.

Ms. Herrick resumed with an overview of subsections, "Description of Problems at the Mill Pond and Dam" and "Management Objectives at the Mill Pond and Dam." Ms. Nenn asked if Commission staff was looking at the water quality impacts of dam removal. Ms. Herrick replied that the primary focus of the Mill Pond and dam analyses with respect to water quality will come down to whether there will be better depth in the pond or whether the dam will be removed. She indicated that the water quality effects of the alternatives will not be modeled but will be evaluated qualitatively. She noted that a major emphasis of the analysis is to examine the effects of alternatives on flooding concerns.

Ms. Nenn also asked whether freeing the river and taking the pond offline from the stream is being considered as an alternative. Ms. Herrick said that a bypass channel is being investigated as an alternative; however, pond and dam alternatives are still in draft phase. Mr. Keith suggested that the third management objective, which states, "Sediment should be managed more effectively in the Mill Pond area" might be too vague (i.e., it is not clear if the objective specifically referring to the pond or upstream of the pond) and should be explained more explicitly. Ms. Herrick replied that both the pond and upstream of the pond are being looked at, however it is aimed more specifically for the Mill Pond.

Mr. Giordano asked how the Mill Pond and dam objectives and/or alternatives are being developed. Ms. Herrick answered that they are mainly developed in-house with input and considerations from Milwaukee County and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Ms. Herrick added that costs will also assist in determining appropriate dam alternative considerations. There were no further comments or questions by the attendees regarding the Mill Pond and dam.

At Ms. Herrick's request, Mr. Owens briefly reviewed Section 5.5, "Recreational Access and Use" starting with subsection, "Description of Findings and Issues Related to Recreational Use and Access." No comments or questions were offered by the attendees. Mr. Owens continued with a brief discussion of the following subsection, "Management Objectives for Recreational Use and Access." Ms. Marsh suggested a table listing all the Plan management objectives and their co-benefits. Mr. Owens and Ms. Herrick mentioned that it is a good suggestion and will be considered. In addition, Mr. Helker recommended incorporating the benefits, assets, and impacts that a healthy watershed and river system can have on commercial and/or local businesses. Mr. Owens added that commercial benefits could potentially be added to Ms. Marsh's suggestion of a co-benefit table related to watershed plan objectives.

[Secretary's Note: In regard to Ms. Marsh's suggestion of adding a table listing co-benefits of management objectives, Mr. Boxhorn added a subsection at the end of each focus area discussing co-benefits associated with achieving that focus area's management objectives.]

## **REVIEW OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR DRAFT PLAN CHAPTER 6, “PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS”**

Mr. Boxhorn presented a brief discussion of potential project recommendations to be included in draft Plan Chapter 6. Mr. Boxhorn requested that communities provide information on projects taking place, planned, or even hoped for so that it can be added to the project list. He noted that including a project in the plan could make it eligible for funding. Ms. Herrick mentioned incorporating green infrastructure in alley ways as an example of a future recommended project. There were no additional comments or questions from the Advisory Group regarding potential projects.

## **UPCOMING STAKEHOLDER MEETING**

Ms. Herrick explained that the upcoming stakeholder meeting will be held in a similar format as this meeting, via GoToMeeting on December 9, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. She added that the meeting agenda is posted on SEWRPC’s website and the stakeholder meeting will include a similar review of draft Plan Chapter 5.

## **NEXT STEPS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Herrick discussed the next steps for plan development. She indicated that Commission staff will work to complete the final Chapter related to Plan recommendations and implementation. Ms. Herrick stated that questions and comments from the Advisory Group related to Chapter 5 of the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan will be accepted, via email or SEWRPC’s Oak Creek website, up to December 11, 2020. No further questions or comments were offered by the Advisory Group for the next steps for the Plan.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Beauchaine  
Recording Secretary

## **COMMENTS RECEIVED PRIOR TO OR FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER 17, 2020 MEETING**

Comments related to Chapter 5 from Mr. Fincher received via email on 11/17/2020.

Mr. Fincher suggested several education-related projects including: 1) Neighborhood studies and analysis for educational campaigns, 2) Targeted digital and social media campaigns, 3) Strategic community block parties, 4) Pet themed activities, such as community dog walks.

Comments related to Chapter 5 from Mr. Giordano received via email on 11/17/2020.

Mr. Giordano shared that Root-Pike WIN can help launch and manage projects. He also noted that Bill Sasse leads an Oak Creek watershed committee for Root-Pike WIN.

Comments related to Chapter 5 from Mr. Keith received via email on 11/17/2020.

Mr. Keith asked if there should be mention of how eventual Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) will impact the goals of the plan.

[Secretary's Note: A subsection titled, "Impacts of TMDLs on Load Reduction Targets" was added at the end of Section 5.2 "Water Quality" indicating that any future TMDL load reductions will supersede those in the Plan.]

Mr. Keith suggested that a brief explanation be added as to why the RWQMPU goals fall short of attaining water quality standards.

[Secretary's Note: Text was added to the second paragraph on page 5 of Chapter 5 to address this request.]

Mr. Keith suggested adding an example of NR 151 implementation sources to the discussion related to load reduction targets.

[Secretary's Note: Text was added to the first paragraph on page 5 to address this request.]

Comments related to Chapter 5 from Ms. Kinzelman received via email on 11/17/2020.

Ms. Kinzelman noted inconsistency throughout the Plan in the spelling of "Mill Pond" (i.e., Mill Pond versus Millpond).

[Secretary's Note: This has been corrected in the text.]

Ms. Kinzelman commented that there needs to be some annotation that fecal coliform bacteria reduction targets may change due to *E. coli* standards.

[Secretary's Note: Text was added after the first partial paragraph on page 11 discussing how translator ratios developed for the Milwaukee Basin TMDL can be used to compare *E. coli* concentrations to the reduction targets for fecal coliform bacteria.]

Referencing Table 5.8, Ms. Kinzelman noted that there needs to be mention of the *E. coli* standard.

[Secretary's Note: Text was added to the footnote to Table 5.8 noting that the translator ratios from the Milwaukee River Basin's TMDL can be used to estimate *E. coli* reduction targets.]

Comments related to Chapter 5 from Mr. Spranger received via email on 11/17/2020.

Mr. Spranger noted the railroad bridge south of College Avenue and east of 13<sup>th</sup> Street, on the North Branch of Oak Creek, backs up large portions of the stream and suggested the bridge be replaced and opened for better stream conveyance.

[Secretary's Note: After the meeting, this location was added as a river flooding concern to Map 4.16 and Table 4.14]

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