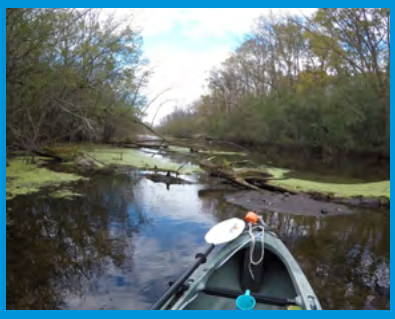
REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS

A publication of the **Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

Volume 8 • Issue 2 • June 2021

SWITCH TO E-NEWS
Help save paper, printing, and mailing costs. Sign up to receive this newsletter by email at **sewrpc.org/news**.



2 **Nagawicka Lake and Oconomowoc River**

3 **Geneva Lake Watershed Inventory**

Applications Being Accepted for $100 Million in Broadband Access Grants

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) recently announced that it is now accepting applications for broadband access grants authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). ARPA allocated funds to aid the State in its response to the COVID-19 emergency and Governor Tony Evers determined to make $100 million of this funding available for improvements in broadband infrastructure. To learn more about this opportunity, please review the application materials at **psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandGrants.aspx**.

Webinars hosted in June by the PSC's Wisconsin Broadband Office provide more information on the grant application process for interested individuals and potential applicants. The webinars include one that provides an overview with general information about the process and one that covers how to map a broadband grant project. Visit the address above for full details, including the webinar slides and recordings.

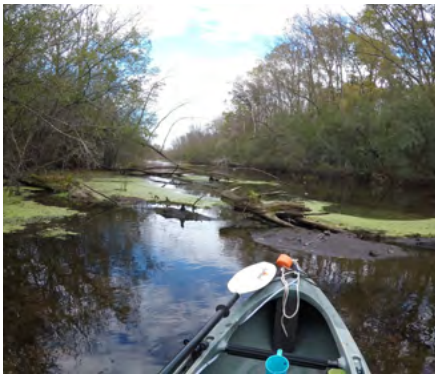
UWM and SEWRPC Submit Mobility Solutions Grant Application

The March 2021 edition of *Regional Planning News* introduced a partnership between UW-Milwaukee professors and Commission staff aimed at identifying solutions for getting workers from Milwaukee to jobs in the Menomonee Falls area. The first phase of the project was recently completed with funding from a Civic Innovation Challenge (CIVIC) Planning Grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The team received valuable feedback from both employers and potential users of transportation services, which helped define the first-last mile mobility solutions that would expand access to jobs in the study area. Input from the first phase included strong interest in on-demand services to help attract and retain employees. In May, the team applied for a second grant through NSF that would fund implementation of a pilot program to implement the preferred transportation services identified during the first phase. Awards are expected to be announced by fall 2021.

Nagawicka Lake Management Plan and Oconomowoc River Study Completed

The Commission recently completed Community Assistance Planning Report No. 262, 2nd Edition, *A Lake Management Plan for Nagawicka Lake, Waukesha County, Wisconsin* and Memorandum Report No. 258, *Oconomowoc River Nutrient and Sediment Study*.

At the request of the City of Delafield, the Commission completed a comprehensive study of Nagawicka Lake, a 1,010-acre lake along the Bark River in Waukesha County, to inventory lake and watershed conditions and provide management recommendations. Commission staff assessed the Lake's shoreline, nearshore lake-bottom sediment, aquatic plant community, and recreational use as well as channel obstructions, stormwater outfalls, and streambank erosion along 8.5 miles of the Bark River. Additionally, the Commission characterized the physical features, natural resources, and human uses of the Lake's 44.7 square mile watershed and estimated nonpoint source pollutant loads, which are the phosphorus and sediment pollution amounts delivered to the Lake from surface runoff and other spread out sources across its watershed. As described in the plan, Nagawicka Lake supports a diverse and productive fishery, maintains a healthy aquatic plant community, and supports a wide variety of recreational uses. However, nonpoint source pollutant loading contributes to water quality problems as well as sediment accumulating at the mouth of the Bark River. In addressing pollutant loading concerns, Commission staff set goals on how much pollution should be decreased based on the Rock River Total Maximum Daily Load project, recommended conservation practices to reduce pollution runoff, prioritized areas to install conservation practices, and suggested potential funding sources. Actively implementing the recommendations and strategies outlined in the management plan will lead to improved water quality for human and wildlife uses as well as healthier ecosystems in the Lake and its watershed.



The upper Oconomowoc River stretches over 20 miles from its headwaters near Slinger in southern Washington County through northern Waukesha County before entering North Lake in the Town of Merton. The Oconomowoc River has long contributed to water quality problems in North Lake, with particularly significant instances following a series of dam repairs and failures over the past few decades. At the request of the North Lake Management District, Commission staff surveyed 3.6 miles of the River from the Monches Dam to North Lake to examine sediment depth and distribution, streambank erosion, and differences in the River's features from upstream to downstream (e.g., water depth, velocity, width, slope). Commission staff also modeled phosphorus and sediment pollution to North Lake from nonpoint sources in the upper Oconomowoc River watershed. Minimal streambank erosion was observed on the River's lower reach, so nonpoint sources are thought to be the main source of phosphorus and sediment pollution. The River has largely flushed out sediment from previous events, leading to sediment accumulating in the North Lake inlet area—where the Upper Oconomowoc River discharges into the Lake. As decreasing the amount of phosphorus and sediment pollution will provide the greatest benefit to the River and North Lake, Commission staff also recommended conservation practices to reduce pollution runoff, targeted priority areas, and suggested funding sources to implement these practices. Several partners in the watershed, including the North Lake Management District, Tall Pines Conservancy, and the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program, strive to monitor water quality and decrease pollution runoff. Continued support of these organizations and their work will better protect the water quality of the Oconomowoc River and North Lake.

Geneva Lake Watershed and Tributary Study

Geneva Lake is the largest and deepest lake in Southeastern Wisconsin and is the second deepest natural inland lake in all of Wisconsin. Although no large streams feed the Lake, over 50 small tributaries drain into the Lake from surrounding uplands. Homes, businesses, and other human activities heavily use these uplands, a situation that can often compromise stream integrity and water quality.

While the Lake is renowned for its clean water, Lake managers and users believe increasing sediment and nutrient loads are reaching the Lake through its tributaries. In response to this concern, Geneva Lake Conservancy retained the Commission to help better understand selected tributaries and their responses to human-caused and natural disturbances. These disturbances can result in eroded or buried streambeds, streams disconnected from their floodplains, stream bank erosion and widening, or channel straightening. Mapping such features enables possible actions to be developed to rehabilitate and restore the tributaries. Last fall, the Commission physically examined the entire navigable lengths of Southwick Creek, which empties into Williams Bay on the north side of the Lake, and three prominent south-shore creeks (Shadow Lane, Birches, and Trinke Creeks). In addition, UW-Whitewater partnered with the Conservancy and the Commission to monitor stream sediment and pollutant loads at several locations.

In December 2020, the Commission and UW-Whitewater provided the Conservancy with reports providing and explaining information developed from the 2020 studies. Preliminary results reveal some encouraging news and some points of concern. Some streams or stream sections have relatively stable and desirable bed, bank, and floodplain configurations as well as reasonable water quality. Other streams and stream sections are actively eroding, are unstable, and carry excessive nutrient and sediment loads. Streams with these problems may compromise critical infrastructure; may not reach their full recreational, aesthetic, and ecological potential; and may not provide high-quality water to Geneva Lake.

The Commission and UW-Whitewater continue to work with the Conservancy to evaluate Geneva Lake's tributaries. The Commission is also actively involved with an initiative that reduces flooding in the Village of Williams Bay while also helping naturalize Southwick Creek's channel. In addition, the Commission is assisting the Conservancy in developing a surface-water grant application to submit to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

SEWRPC Participates in EcoFEST

On April 17th, Commission staff participated in the EcoFest Racine/Celebrate Earth Day 2021 virtual organization and exhibitor fair. The event included a drive thru with free garden kits, compost bags, and kids' activities. In addition, each exhibitor had a virtual (online) booth where they could share information (including photos, videos, website links, and written information) about their organization and host a virtual meeting or use a built-in live chat to interact with attendees. The Public Involvement and Outreach (PIO) team provided a video for attendees to access at their leisure. The PIO team also offered a live virtual event with presentation and time for questions and answers.

Did You Know?

Southeastern Wisconsin makes up only 5% of the State's land area but makes up 35% of the State's population, jobs, and wealth.

WORKFORCE MOBILITY TEAM

Know an employer struggling to get workers to the workplace? Tell them about the Workforce Mobility Team! The Team is here to work with any employers in the Region to help them address their workforce mobility challenges.

For more information:
sewrpc.org/mobility

To arrange a meeting:
mobility@sewrpc.org

W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE
PO BOX 1607
WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN 53187-1607

SEWRPC
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission