Southeastern Wisconsin FOX RIVER COMMISSION: A Quick Review, What’s New, an Item of Concern

Fox River Summit
March 18, 2016

James (Jim) Pindel
SEWFRC, Secretary/Treasurer
Town of Waterford, Commissioner
A Quick Review

• The Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission (SEWFRC) established in 1997 by Wisc. Act 27
• In response to citizen & community concerns over water resource problems in Fox River System
• An Implementation Plan developed in 1998
• Channeled $1,475,000 in ~ 50 beneficial projects
  – Erosion Control, Stormwater Abatement, Public Access
  – Educational efforts, Feasibility Studies
What is the SEWFRC doing?

Since the Original Implementation Plan:

- Channeled $222,213 into Beneficial Completed Projects.
- Presently working on $219,204 on 11 Active Projects
  - Major portion allocated to Waterford Impoundment Dredging Permit Application
- Have $158,312 Available out of the $400,000 Grant Funds
- Have Received 2nd $10,000 Allocation from Racine County

- Worked on Expansion of Commissions Jurisdiction
  - Documented Requested Changes to State Statutes
  - Approached State Senator Mary Lazich for Help
  - Worked with Senator Lazich’s Staff to Formalize Changes
Testified before Legislature
Senate Subcommittee Natural Resources & Energy
Assembly Subcommittee Natural Resources & Sporting Heritage
SB 548 Signed into Law
What is New for SEWFRC?

1997 State Statutes defining the SEWFRC:
- Jurisdiction covers 36.5 mi stretch from North limit of City of Waukesha down to Waterford Dam.
- Tributary drainage area (watershed) includes 156 square miles

2016 State Statutes defining the SEWFRC:
- Jurisdiction covers 63.5 mi stretch from North limit of City of Waukesha to Wisconsin – Illinois Border.
- Tributary drainage area (watershed) includes 267 square miles
Membership:

- **Counties**
  - Racine (1) and Waukesha (1)

- **Municipalities**
  - City of Waukesha (1)
  - Village of Waterford (1)
  - Village of Big Bend (2)
  - Village of Mukwonago (1)
  - Town of Mukwonago (1)
  - Town of Vernon (3)
  - Town of Waterford (3)
  - Town of Waukesha (1)
  - = 15 Voting Commissioners

- **Ex Officio**
  - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (1)
  - Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (1)
Membership:

- **Counties**
  - Waukesha (1), Racine (1) and Kenosha (1)

- **Municipalities**
  - City of Waukesha (1)  City of Burlington (1)
  - Village of Waterford (1)  Town of Burlington (1)
  - Village of Big Bend (1)  Village of Silver Lake (1)
  - Village of Mukwonago (1)  Village of Rochester (1)
  - Town of Mukwonago (1)  Town of Wheatland (1)
  - Town of Vernon (1)  Town of Salem (1)
  - Town of Waterford (1)
  - Town of Waukesha (1)  = 17 Voting Commissioners

- **Ex Officio**
  - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (1)
  - Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (1)
Some Interesting Facts

- Total Fox River Mainstream Miles 197 mi
  81 mi in Wisconsin & 116 mi in Illinois
  63.5 River Miles (32%) in New Boundary

- Total Drainage Area of Fox River 2,648 sq. mi
  926 sq. mi in Wisconsin & 1,722 in Illinois
  267 sq. mi (10%) in New Boundary
What Other Changes Made

- Fiscal Year Changed from Calendar Year to July 1 to next Year June 30
  - Aligns Fiscal year with State Budget
  - Aligns Fiscal Year with County Budget Cycles
- Quorum Changed from Fixed 9 Commissioners to Majority of Voting Commissioners
- May Extend Area of Jurisdiction by Majority Affirmative Vote
2011 Implementation Plan
Item of Concern

• Impact on the Fox River if City of Waukesha is granted Lake Michigan Water Diversion
  – Presently Waukesha obtains its water principally from the deep water aquifer diluted with shallow aquifer water to obtain its water supply
  – After going through its system, the return water is treated at its Water Purification Plant and the clean effluent is discharged into the Fox River at a rate of approximate 10,000,000 gallons per day
Incompatible Comments

Supporting Diversion
• Deep Water Aquafer is failing, limestone structure is deteriorating, not a sustainable water source

Opposing Diversion
• Deep Water Aquafer is rising in depth and is sustainable with Radium treatment & improved Resource Management
Incompatible Comments

Supporting Diversion

• Treating the Water to remove Radium was tried by one municipality. It was expensive and failed

Opposing Diversion

• Over 45 Communities in Wis. Treat their water Successfully to remove Radium, including neighbors Brookfield & Pewaukee
• One of the 4 Waukesha deep aquifer wells is already being treated Successfully for Radium
Incompatible Comments

**Supporting Diversion**
- Stopping use of Shallow Wells along Fox River used for dilution, would increase the ground water charging the Fox River resulting in even greater flow

**Opposing Diversion**
- During Low Flow Periods (Aug – Sept) the 10M GPD of Clean Effluent from the Waukesha Treatment Plant provides 90% of the Fox River Flow
Incompatible Comments

Supporting Diversion
• Lake Michigan Water is the Only Reasonable Source of Water to meet the Needs of Waukesha’s Water Supply Needs

Opposing Diversion
• Compact Implementation Coalition (CIC) offered a non-diversion solution, costing $150M less, meeting Waukesha’s Water Supply Needs
• New Report by GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc. Confirms Great Lakes Water Not Necessary for Waukesha
Thank you for your Attention

Please visit our Table Top Display
Please visit our Website

SEWFRC
WHO IS THE SEWFRC?

The Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission (SEWFRC) was established in 1997 by Wisconsin Act 27 (1997 - 1999 Budget Bill) in response to citizen and community concerns over water resource problems in the Fox River system. Under the 1997 Wisconsin Act 27, the SEWFRC was given the authority to carry out a number of programs and measures designed to improve water resource conditions in the Fox River system within the identified planning area.

The area of jurisdiction for the SEWFRC consists of the tributary drainage area to the 36.5-mile-long reach of the Fox River between the Village of Waterford dam in Racine County and the northern limits of the City of Waukesha north of Moreland Boulevard. The tributary drainage area for the implementation planning area ranges from approximately 119 square miles at the upper end of the planning area to approximately 312 square miles at I-43 and to about 364 square miles at the Waterford dam.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission was charged with developing an Implementation Plan on behalf of the SEWFRC in 1997. The plan was adopted in March 1998, updated in September 2011 and still serves as a dynamic guide in assisting the Commission to conduct its work.

WHAT DOES THE SEWFRC DO?

The Commission has supported numerous projects within the planning area and has contributed approximately $1.25 million to projects that help improve the Illinois Fox River basin.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission does the following:

- Initiate and coordinate surveys and research projects to gather data relating to the surface waters and groundwaters of the Illinois Fox River basin
- Maintain a liaison with Federal, State, and local agencies and other organizations involved in protecting, rehabilitating, and managing water resources
- Develop a public informational and educational program on issues related to the surface waters and groundwaters of the Illinois Fox River basin
- Develop and implement plans or projects to:
  - Improve water quality and the scenic, economic and environmental value of the surface waters and groundwaters of the Illinois Fox River basin
  - Protect or enhance the recreational use of the navigable waters of the Illinois Fox River basin
  - Provide for implementation of the Illinois Water Quality Standards in the Fox River basin
  - Develop, construct and implement projects to improve water quality and quantity and help to protect the waters and groundwaters of the Illinois Fox River basin

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN
Al Sikora
262-534-3906
asikora@wdtweb.com