

## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Milwaukee County Land and Water Resource Management Plan is to provide guidance for the restoration, improvement, and protection of ecological diversity and quality, and to promote the beneficial uses of the land, water, and related resources found throughout the County. Goals are established within this plan to guide county and other agency initiatives over a five-year period, from 2007 to 2011. The goals provide the basis for funding those initiatives from various private, local, state, and federal sources. Used as a tool to guide and coordinate a variety of agencies and programs, the plan will streamline decision-making and program administration. The process to revise the plan for another five-year period will begin in 2010. Progress toward reaching plan goals will be evaluated each year.

### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

This plan is not intended to contain an exhaustive inventory of land and water resources in Milwaukee County. Instead, it draws upon existing information and inventories from previously prepared documents. Recent development trends and land use data were compiled to supplement previous inventories. Pollution control plans for the five Milwaukee River Priority Watersheds and computer data base information were used extensively. Documents utilized to support plan efforts and to provide additional information are listed in the References section of this plan.

Development of this plan involved identifying and prioritizing land and water resource issues of concern and strategizing ways to address them. Input from a wide variety of stakeholders and the public was sought concerning the individual goals and objectives of this plan (see Appendix 1 for more detailed discussion). Comments received from these stakeholders, which include Land & Water Basin Team Leaders in the Milwaukee River Basin, citizen advisory groups, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), were used to refine goals and objectives to better reflect current conditions and issues.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY PLAN AND PRIORITY WATERSHED PLANS**

This plan is not intended to replace the existing priority watershed plans, which focus on specific drainage basins. Instead, this plan provides recommendations specific to Milwaukee County and all of the watersheds within it. Many of the issues and recommendations presented in the priority watershed plans were considered and are incorporated into this plan, particularly in the work plan goals (see Table 1, page 2). Since Milwaukee County is entirely incorporated, specific community-related issues, such as local smart growth initiatives, were not incorporated into this plan to avoid duplicity.

**Table 1. Key Land and Water Resource Issues Identified in the Milwaukee River State of the Basin Report (2001) and Root-Pike River State of the Basin Report (2002)**

- 1. Protect and preserve natural lands.** (2006 LWRMP Work Plan Goal 2)\*
- 2. Promote “smart growth” initiatives.**
- 3. Educate citizens about the importance of the basin as a resource and support efforts to improve, maintain, and enhance its quality.** (2006 LWRMP Work Plan Goal 1–4)\*
- 4. Improve water quality by controlling both point and nonpoint sources of pollution.** (2006 LWRMP Work Plan Goal 1)\*
- 5. Protect riparian areas and restore degraded habitat.** (2006 LWRMP Work Plan Goal 2)\*

*\*Denotes the goal from the 2006 LWRMP Work Plan that the issue was incorporated into.*

## **PARTNERS IN THE LAND & WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Many agencies and organizations are involved in protecting water resources in Milwaukee County (Appendix 1). Although each agency and organization has its own individual work plan and mission, all are united in their goal to preserve and enhance the environment for future generations.

## **PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

A County Land & Water Resource Management Planning Program was created through amendments to Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes in Wisconsin Act 27 (the 1997-1999 Biennial Budget Bill). Recommendations for Plan format and content were provided by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board on November 16, 2004. The Plan must be updated every five years and is to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) for review. A copy is also submitted to the local DNR Water Basin Leader for review.

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PROHIBITIONS**

Performance standards and prohibitions are an important concept in County Land & Water Resource Management Plans. Through Wisconsin Act 27, the Legislature amended the statutes to allow County Land and Water Conservation Committees to develop and adopt standards and specifications for management practices to control erosion, sedimentation, and nonpoint source water pollution.

The statutes also required the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to develop performance standards for agricultural and non-agricultural nonpoint pollution sources. These state standards were approved in 2002. The standards address methods for controlling sediment runoff at construction sites, managing

stormwater, controlling nutrient runoff, and reducing cropland soil erosion. The standards are listed in Tables 7 and 8 (pages 42 and 45, respectively), and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

## **LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION AND PUBLIC HEARINGS**

In finalizing this plan, several opportunities were made for individuals to comment. Milwaukee County placed legal notices in the Milwaukee Journal and in local newspapers for Franklin and Oak Creek. Copies of the draft plan were placed in the Milwaukee, Franklin, and Oak Creek Public Libraries, and the executive summary of the draft plan was made available on the Milwaukee County website. Landowners and operators were mailed a notice of the Public Hearing for this plan, which was held on January 24, 2006. Finally, both the Milwaukee County Land Conservation Committee Meeting (April 4, 2006) and the County Board Meeting (April 13, 2006), in which the plan was approved, were open to the public. Comments from citizens were considered in the development process.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND TRENDS**

The natural resources of Milwaukee County are vital to economic development and the ability to provide a pleasant and habitable environment for human life. To fully understand the importance of natural resources to Milwaukee County and the surrounding region, it is essential to recognize that, in addition to the countless environmental benefits that they provide, activities and/or uses related to natural resources bring in millions of dollars in revenue each year to local communities. That revenue comes primarily from the vast array of recreational users of the resources. While it is difficult to place a specific dollar value on these resources, straight-line logic tells us that we cannot afford to waste them and must do all that we can to protect them – for present and future generations.