

# REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS

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## SWITCH TO E-NEWS

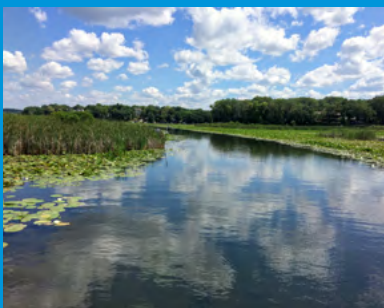
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## Regional Food System Plan Summer Tour

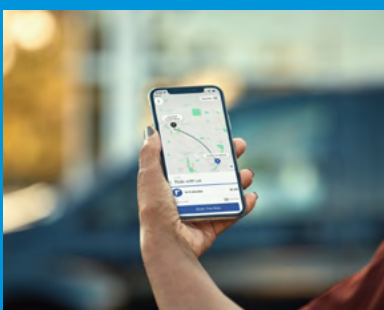
SEWRPC staff was busy over the winter and spring collecting information about the different stages of the Region's food system. This includes information about the Region's farms, food and beverage manufacturers, stores and restaurants, consumers, and how much food goes to waste. Over the summer, staff will use this information to write the next chapters of the plan. Staff will also visit farmers' markets and grocery stores in all seven counties of the Region to share the latest info with shoppers throughout Southeastern Wisconsin! Keep up with SEWRPC staff this summer on the SEWRPC Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SEWRPC](https://www.facebook.com/SEWRPC) and visit [www.sewrpc.org/RFSP](http://www.sewrpc.org/RFSP) to learn more about the plan.



Regional  
**Food System**  
Plan



## 2 Aquatic Plant Management



## 3 FlexRide Milwaukee Update

## Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan Approved

The Commission is pleased to announce that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) completed their review of the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (Community Assistance Planning Report No. 330) and found the plan to be consistent with the USEPA's nine key elements critical for achieving improvements in water quality. The plan provides general recommendations and over 400 specific projects that could be implemented to address water quality, habitat, recreational access and use, and flooding. In addition, the plan provides five alternatives for managing the Mill Pond and the Mill Pond dam. This finding of consistency with the USEPA's nine key elements means the areas within the watershed are now eligible for funding through Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act to implement projects and programs that improve water quality. The nine key element plan approval will expire in 30 years (2051). While this approval is exciting news, the work has just begun! The next 5 to 10 years will be critical for watershed communities and stakeholders to maintain momentum and begin plan implementation.

The plan and other related materials can be accessed at: [www.sewrpc.org/OakCreekWRP](http://www.sewrpc.org/OakCreekWRP).



## Aquatic Plant Management Planning in Waukesha and Walworth Counties

The Commission recently completed Memorandum Report No. 260, *Aquatic Plant Management Plan for Eagle Spring Lake, Waukesha County, Wisconsin* and an aquatic plant management plan update for Pewaukee Lake. In addition, plans for School Section Lake in Waukesha County and Delavan Lake in Walworth County are forthcoming. These plans have received WDNR approval and have been used to prepare harvesting permits for their respective waterbodies. Below are some specific efforts related to the Commission's aquatic plant management planning program. For more information, visit [www.sewrpc.org/lakeandstream](http://www.sewrpc.org/lakeandstream).

With assistance from the Delavan Lake Sanitary District, Commission staff completed an aquatic plant survey of Delavan Lake in August 2020. Staff observed 14 species across the Lake with plants growing up to 22 feet deep. Coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), a native species, was the most observed species and formed dense, nearly monocultural beds between 7 to 13 feet deep off the northern and southwestern shores. Invasive Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) was the second-most observed species with low to moderate density throughout much of the Lake. The aquatic plant management plan focuses on preserving sensitive areas in the northern inlet, northern shoreline, and southwestern bays while facilitating boating and other forms of recreation by controlling abundant vegetation growth in the main body of the Lake.

Commission staff completed an aquatic plant survey of School Section Lake in August 2020 with help from the School Section Lake Management District. Despite its relatively small size, School Section Lake hosts an impressive 28 aquatic plant species, including sensitive native species like muskgrass and slender nitella (*Nitella flexilis*). The Lake has extensive muskgrass beds, which are important for providing aquatic organism food and habitat as well as improving water quality. Much of the Lake is composed of wetlands, where the District is concerned that the invasive purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is expanding. Commission staff recorded observations of purple loosestrife as part of their survey to assist with the removal of this species.

In collaboration with the Eagle Spring Lake Management District, Commission staff completed an aquatic plant survey of Eagle Spring lake in August 2021. The survey results indicated the Lake's aquatic plant community is in good condition with vegetative cover over most of the Lake and 26 plant species detected. Staff observed populations of several sensitive native species muskgrass (*Chara* spp.), forked nitella (*Nitella furcata*), small bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*), small bur-reed (*Sparganium natans*), and whorled watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum verticillatum*), which are good indicators of the Lake's overall health. The completed aquatic plant management plan provides a strategy to continue managing the Lake's invasive Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) population while also preserving the extensive sensitive areas along the Lake's western extent that provide food and shelter to aquatic organisms.

In spring 2022, the Lake Pewaukee Sanitary District requested that the Commission assist with updating its aquatic plant management based on a survey conducted by WDNR staff in August 2020. WDNR staff observed 24 species in the Lake and several survey points had between five to nine species observed, indicating a diverse, well-mixed plant community within the Lake. The most common species were native, such as water celery, southern naiad (*Najas guadalupensis*), and small pondweed (*Potamogeton pusillus*), but invasive EWM, curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), and starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*) were also found. The aquatic plant management plan provides for recreational access from the shallow eastern half of the Lake to the deeper western half while also protecting sensitive areas near the inlets of Audley and Coco Creeks. Limiting the spread of starry stonewort within the Lake and to other lakes is a major focus for the District.



## FlexRide Milwaukee Update

UW-Milwaukee and SEWRPC have continued the FlexRide Milwaukee on-demand transportation pilot study, supported by a \$1 million National Science Foundation grant and numerous partners. Since March, the FlexRide team has overseen service operations connecting Milwaukee residents to jobs at businesses in the Menomonee Falls and Butler area. As the pilot has progressed, the team has made changes in response to feedback and challenges encountered, including extending service hours and making significant service design improvements. Promotion of the service and alleviating barriers to riding the service have been a major focus and ridership has steadily grown. As of mid-June, over 400 eligible applicants have been accepted into the pilot. About 2/3 are unemployed and 85% do not have access to a car. The FlexRide team continues to study how well the service helps connect these individuals to jobs, what improvements can be made, and how a successful service could be sustained after the pilot period ends this fall. For more information, including how to apply, visit [www.flexridemke.com](http://www.flexridemke.com).



## Bridging the Last Mile Plan Completed

*Bridging the Last Mile*, a plan identifying flexible transportation solutions in Southeastern Wisconsin, is now complete. The plan, led by Mobilise and supported by Commission staff and the consulting firm HNTB, explores effective, viable workforce transportation services for businesses and their employees in southern Milwaukee County and eastern Waukesha County. These places have a significant number of well-paying jobs but are difficult to serve with fixed-route transit service, thus exacerbating workforce shortages. An important element of the plan was identifying how to implement and sustain transportation services, possibly through creation of a Transportation Management Association, or TMA, to oversee and coordinate mobility programs and services. The plan also identifies immediate steps that Mobilise and its partners can take to close the last-mile gap, including supporting extension of the FlexRide pilot and providing on-demand service to Franklin Business Park and other parts of the Region, enabling employers to utilize on-demand services as an employee recruitment/retention tool, and aligning businesses to advocate for funding to expand fixed-route transit services in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. The plan was made possible by a group of funding partners led by Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County, along with Mandel Group, the City of Franklin, GRAEF, and the Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Partnership. To view the plan, visit Mobilise's website at [www.mobilisewi.org](http://www.mobilisewi.org).





## In the Community



The Public Involvement and Outreach Team was in Racine during April helping students learn about planning and the environment. On the 7th, staff visited the Girl's STEM club at Mitchell School (sponsored by SC Johnson), where they were working on a project to build a city! Staff used a floodplain model

(provided by the Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater, & Coastal Management) to help the students understand how to plan a city and avoid flooding. On the 29th, staff attended the Racine B-WET Project Field Day. B-WET is an environmental education program that promotes place-based experiential learning for K-12 students and related professional development for teachers. B-WET fosters the growth of new, innovative programs and encourages capacity-building and environmental education partnerships.

It may be summertime, but the Team is always looking for ways to get youth involved in regional planning! If there is an event or group you would like the Team to visit, send an email to [sewrpc@sewrpc.org](mailto:sewrpc@sewrpc.org).

## Did You Know?

Southeastern Wisconsin has more than 50 farmers' markets and over 300 grocery stores?



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](https://sewrpc.org/mobility)

To arrange a meeting:  
[mobility@sewrpc.org](mailto:mobility@sewrpc.org)