

Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program



Who: The City of Oconomowoc Wastewater Utility, along with Tall Pines Conservancy and Ruekert & Mielke, Inc. are working together as lead partners in the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program. The program also involves over 30 community partners including governmental entities, community organizations, lake groups, and non-profit organizations.

What: The ultimate goal of this project is to reduce non-point source sediment from agricultural land, urban storm water, construction sites, and to improve water quality. This will enable the City of Oconomowoc to reach compliance with the Department of Natural Resources wastewater and storm water permit requirements in a cost-effective manner. The program was awarded one of 3 Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grants in the State, and received acceptance of the first Adaptive Management Plan by the DNR.

Where: The watershed forms in Washington County and terminates when it enters the Rock River in Jefferson County. It is 49 miles in length and includes 17 lakes. Nearly half of the watershed, 46%, is defined as agriculture, while 19% is wetland, 14% forest, 11% urban/suburban and 10% water or open land.

Why: The Oconomowoc River is within the larger Rock River Watershed. Therefore, the program will improve the water quality of both the Oconomowoc River and also the Rock River while aiding in the objectives of reaching the Rock River Total Maximum Daily Pollutant Load rule. The specific pollutants to be reduced are phosphorous and total suspended solids. Major benefits of the program, in addition to improving surface water quality in area streams and lakes, include enhanced habitat and wildlife, reduced aquatic weed growth and algal blooms.

How: The Adaptive Management Program aims to prevent pollutants from getting into the waterways through improved conservation practices.

These include:

- 1) incorporation of cover crops, filter strips and improved tillage practices on agricultural land,
- 2) implementation of agricultural nutrient management plans,
- 3) incorporation of permanent land protection resources including conservation easements,
- 4) realization of an aggressive street cleaning program and storm water Best Management Practices, and
- 5) utilization of leaf collection practices and urban property Best Management Practices, including rain gardens, porous pavement, infiltration basins, retention ponds and residential fertilizer control.

