

Community-Driven Planning for the East River Recreational Trail

Timeline: July 2023 – June 2024

What: A cross-boundary planning effort for the East River Recreational Trail to:

- Identify solutions for portions of the trail that experience significant flooding.
- Improve fish and wildlife habitat within the trail corridor.
- Improve trail and water access for recreational users.
- Identify private, state, and federal funding sources for trail and habitat improvement projects. .



Why: Flooding of the East River Recreational Trail is a priority concern among all the municipalities through which it passes. Portions of the trail are notorious for being inaccessible, repeatedly inundated for significant portions of the year due to both coastal and riverine flooding. After flood waters recede, trail users often describe a trail left impassable by mud and debris. In addition, these slippery conditions pose public safety hazards for both pedestrians and cyclists.

How: Planning will include working with municipalities to identify and prioritize portions of the trail, while coordinating with existing efforts within the watershed such as a Brown County initiative to create an East River Water Trail. The East River Recreational Trail Master Plan will incorporate existing information from municipal comprehensive and recreation plans and the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission's Lower East River Restoration Plan. It will fill existing gaps to create a comprehensive strategy from which municipalities can begin implementing improvements to the East River Recreational Trail and its corridor.

Partners: Village of Allouez, City of Green Bay, Village of Bellevue, City of De Pere, Town of Ledgeview, East River Collaborative core team (The Nature Conservancy, Wisconsin Sea Grant, and NEW Water)



Benefits:

- *Wildlife and Habitat:* Habitat restoration with native plants enhances biodiversity and wildlife, improves water quality, and provides natural flood mitigation.
- *Recreation:* Improved space for outdoor recreation, access to the river, cycling, jogging, and walking for safer commutes and play.
- *Natural Beauty:* Access to stunning views, places for people to connect with nature, to unwind, and to enjoy the river contribute to mental health and well-being.
- *Alternative Transportation:* An improved trail encourages sustainable transportation such as cycling which can help reduce traffic congestion, lower carbon emissions, and contribute to eco-friendlier communities.
- *Tourism and Economic Impact:* Attracting tourists and locals alike, trail improvements lead to patronage of local businesses, stimulate economic growth and provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

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