



WISCONSIN

# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Aaron Brault**

*Planning & Conservation Director*

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February 1, 2019

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Adam Payne,

I am pleased to submit the 2018 Annual Report for the Planning & Conservation Department (Department). I continue to be thankful for the support of the County Board (Board) and County Administrator. The collaboration they instill has allowed our Department to provide exceptional environmental best practices, amenities, and services to the public we serve.

The Department was involved in a number of exciting projects in 2018. With the financial help of the Johnsonville Rod & Gun Club, we were able to develop a small, low cost, new fishing area and kayak launch on a piece of underutilized Sheboygan County property along the Sheboygan River. Though no official counts have been taken, anecdotally, staff noticed quite a bit of use of the site. Through the support of the Board we were also able to install a new amenity at the Sheboygan Marsh County Park. A four stall privy was delivered and set into place in July. This will replace two dilapidated privies in the north camp area. This improvement will serve generations.

The Department also continued to successfully address water quality and other environmental issues throughout the County. Conservation staff worked with local landowners to install over 3 acres of riparian vegetative buffers and 4,250 lineal feet of grassed waterways. Staff continues to strive to be innovative and creative in solving our local water quality challenges. Environmental restoration work also continued on the non-wetland mitigation bank portion of the Amsterdam Dunes property. Nearly 20 acres of previously farmed land was converted back to wetlands or upland habitat. Thus far, the wetland restoration areas appear to be thriving.

Though they were overcome, the Department also faced a few frustrations throughout the year. Perhaps the biggest frustration has been the return of the cattail problem at the Sheboygan Marsh. Drawdowns help prevent the cattail problem, but unfortunately, 2017 and 2018 proved extremely wet and the system could never be drawn down as planned. Compounding that issue in 2018, was the dam bypass gate failure that was not resolved until July 3. A winter burn of approximately 400 acres of the cattails was planned, but, we did not have enough snow cover and/or ice cover to complete that project.

I am proud of the Department staff and all that they accomplish for the community, and again, the Department is very appreciative of the support we receive from our leadership.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Brault  
Planning & Conservation Director

## Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

The Planning & Conservation Department (Department) is committed to providing sound information and knowledge on environmental issues that affect our community, protecting our county's natural resources, and, first and foremost, working with the public which we serve in a straightforward, honest approach.

The Department is responsible for the County's mapping information, many of its parks and open spaces, and helping protect the County's environment primarily in regards to water quality issues.

## Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2018

- Catalogued and geo-referenced over 40,000 property surveys that will now be available to the public on a parcel basis.
- Worked to close the sale of the 1.03 acre property on Pennsylvania Avenue for a redevelopment opportunity that will see a 5 story multi-use building constructed.
- Worked to close the sale of Lot 3 in the Shores of Amsterdam Dunes Subdivision and bring the County into the black in regards to repaying the original acquisition outlay for the Amsterdam Dunes Preservation Area.
- Installed 3.45 acres of vegetative buffers, 4,250 lineal feet of grassed waterways, 2 manure storage facilities, and one wetland scrape. Eight wells were also decommissioned.
- Began restoring nearly 20 acres of the Amsterdam Dunes Preservation Area.
- Worked with the Transportation Department to implement the CTH PP road diet project and bike path addition.
- Completed the 2019-2021 Sheboygan County Land Information Plan.
- Issued 152 Sanitary Permits (a 9.8% decrease from 2017, though this decrease was primarily due to wet weather), issued 134 Shoreland Permits (a 47% increase from 2017), 8 Erosion Control Permits (a decrease of one from 2017), and reviewed and approved 51 certified survey maps (a 0.5% increase from 2017) that resulted in 101 new lots. Issued 45 Certificates of Compliance, 13 Notices of Non-compliance, and conducted 102 Status Reviews for the Farmland Preservation Program.
- Implemented an ash tree salvage sale at the Amsterdam Dunes Preservation Area.
- Sold over 65,000 trees to over 600 customers.
- Designed and managed one manure storage structure install, one manure storage closure, and one wetland scrape.

## Budget

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actuals</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Expenses	\$2,043,483	\$2,214,664	\$171,181
Revenues	\$2,003,554	\$2,218,985	\$215,431
	-\$33,187	\$4,321	\$44,250

The Department had a few particularly challenging budget issues in 2018. The two principal items that created challenges were the aforementioned cattail removals and the dam bypass gate failure. Though the Transportation Department consistently delivers excellent service to our Department, it came at a cost in 2018. The cattail removals and help with the bypass gate removal helped account for over \$66,000 in overages in our interdepartmental account with the Transportation Department.

Thankfully, we implemented cost saving measures in time so that when comparing our actual expenditures to actual revenues we were still able to end the year with a positive variance of \$4,321.

The total tax levy to support the Department in 2018 consisted of \$1,119,738 which was a slight increase of approximately 2.4% over 2017. This increase primarily went to covering the Department's increased allocation provided to the Information Technology Department for support. The 2019 \$2,092,798 Department budget includes a total levy amount of \$1,106,491, or a decrease of approximately 1.2% compared to what was allocated in 2018.

### **Issues and Challenges Ahead**

Each year brings new issues and challenges to the Department. Moving forward, we anticipate being asked to be involved more in Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) matters. This is a very complicated issue and from our Department's standpoint, there does not appear to be clear or consistent guidance on how to implement the solutions. We also anticipate a learning curve on the rules and expectations from a regulatory standpoint concerning the recent depth to bedrock legislation. Though only small parts of our County will be affected, we are expecting that because the rules will be entirely new, there will be a steep learning curve for both staff and landowners. Lastly, the experimental phosphorus reducing iron filter we installed on a tile line in 2017 did not perform as well in 2018 as it originally did due to calcification of the treatment media. We are working on solutions and are hopeful we can begin to again generate phosphorus capture comparable to what we originally experienced.

### **Goals and Objectives for 2019**

We are planning a number of goals to benefit the community in 2019. Some of the more significant ones are:

- Installation of an experimental phosphorus reducing septic system on a home adjacent to Elkhart Lake.
- Completion of the Southside Utility Corridor Trail in the City of Sheboygan.
- Installation of the Sheboygan Marsh Bypass Gate replacement.
- Submit the final banking instrument for the Amsterdam Dunes Wetland Mitigation Bank.
- Implement the approved mountain bike trail system at Rocky Knoll.
- Complete the 2017 USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant.
- Potential construction of the new Sheboygan Marsh Multi-purpose Educational Building if enough funds are raised.