



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Aaron Brault
Planning & Conservation Director

February 14, 2020

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

I would like to thank and commend you for your continued support of our Department. Your support provides our Department the ability to complete innovative projects and implement programs that benefit Sheboygan County residents. Below are a few of the Department's highlights from 2019.

This year our Department, with the help of our environmental consultant, Stantec, was successful in obtaining its third USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in the amount of \$300,000, which totals one million dollars awarded to the County since 2014. Because of the excellent intergovernmental and public/private relationships that exist within the County, we have been able to garner success yet again. The money from these grants are utilized to complete Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments, site sampling, and material management plans on industrial sites that may have been contaminated due to prior land use practices. These assessments help contribute to the ultimate cleanup and redevelopment of the sites. It is estimated that with help from these grants over \$125 million in total redevelopment opportunities have moved, or soon will move forward since 2014.

Department staff implemented the State's first experimental phosphorus reducing septic system. This system is located on a willing private owner's property along Elkhart Lake and utilizes a passive filtration system to remove phosphorus before the effluent reaches the drainage field. Once the landowners officially move into the home the septic system will be monitored and tested.

Lastly, two new trails were completed to accommodate both the casual and adventurous of cyclists. The Rocky Knoll Mountain Bike & Hiking Trail offers approximately five miles of trail with three different segments that vary in difficulty. This project was completed with the help of WisCorps, Department staff, and Department Heads during the United Way Day of Caring Event. The Southside Utility Corridor Trail was completed and offers a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile paved connection from Moenning Road to South 18th Street, mainly in the Town of Wilson. This offers another means of access to the Town of Wilson Dog Park, as well as connections to a school, large apartment complex, and an industrial park.

These efforts are just a few of the innovative projects that our Department completed this year. The following pages of this report also list various projects and programs our Department has implemented this year. Again, I would like to thank you for the continued support. To view an interactive version of this report, click on the following link <https://tinyurl.com/shebco2019>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Brault

Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

The Planning & Conservation 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 2019

- Obtained a \$300,000 2019 USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant and closed out the 2017 grant. So far, the funding has allowed investigations of 28 properties.
- Completed the 10-year update to the Sheboygan County Comprehensive Plan.
- The County's Geographic Information System parcel fabric was showcased at the annual ESRI User Conference.
- Completed the mountain bike trail system at Rocky Knoll.
- Completed the Southside Utility Corridor Trail in the City of Sheboygan.
- Received nine applications for the ever-popular Stewardship Grant Program. Of the nine applications, seven projects were awarded a total of \$124,273 to implement their projects.
- A record number of people (806) ordered 74,000 trees this year during our annual tree sale.
- Installed 11 acres of vegetative buffers, 2,650 linear feet of grassed waterways, and decommissioned 4 wells.
- Issued 15 stormwater erosion control permits, issued 138 shoreland zoning permits and 5 conditional use permits, issued 168 sanitary permits, and reviewed/approved 42 certified survey maps.
- Planted over 4,000 trees at Amsterdam Dunes as part of a US Forestry Service grant.
- Completed the installation of the experimental phosphorus reducing septic system at the residence adjacent to Elkhart Lake.

Budget

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Expenses	\$2,131,730	\$2,414,055	-\$282,326
Revenues	\$2,096,697	\$2,357,468	\$260,771
Result	\$-35,033	-\$56,588 (see below)	-\$21,555

The Department had a few particularly challenging budget issues in 2019. Two items that created large variances were the continued cattail removals at the Sheboygan Marsh and unexpected electrical issues at the Sheboygan Marsh Lodge. The cattail issue was especially problematic because the largest removals happened near the end of the year. Normally, spring sees the largest removals and we can adjust expenses throughout the remainder of the year. Take away these unexpected expenses and the Department's budget is on point. Please note too, our actual year-to-date revenue versus expenditure total is misleading. From time to time we are able to utilize revenue from the Department's various non-lapsing accounts for special projects (with the approval of the Planning, Resources, Agriculture & Extension Committee). Based on accounting procedures, however, those revenues are not added to our actual revenues versus expenses to offset the corresponding project expense. The expense is the only

entry into the actual year-to-date column. As such, if the non-lapsing dollars utilized in 2019 are considered, the negative \$56,588 amount shown above would actually turn into a positive actual variance of \$16,418 for the year when comparing actual revenues versus expenses.

The total tax levy to support the Department in 2019 consisted of \$1,106,491, a slight decrease of approximately 1.18% compared to 2018. The 2020 Department budget of \$2,217,650 includes a total levy amount of \$1,146,714, an increase of approximately 3.64% compared to 2019. Half of this increase can be attributed to the planned purchase of a new vehicle for the Department.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

Every year has its own unforeseen issues and challenges. This year we can account for many of these challenges due to a record high rainy season which impacted the County. The heavy rains shortened the building season, caused flooding in certain areas, created an increase in shoreland rip-rap permits, created problems with getting crops off the fields, caused farm land manure spreading issues, and caused bog problems at the Sheboygan Marsh. Staff worked diligently to make sure farmers, contractors, and excavators worked the lands in a way that created less of an impact to the landscape although the Department had regulatory issues with some. Permit issuance continues to increase within our Department and the saturated soils, increased erosion potential, and high-water levels has created circumstances where extra time and care is needed when reviewing permit applications.

Goals and Objectives for 2020

- Start construction of the new Sheboygan Marsh Multi-purpose Educational Building.
- Install the Sheboygan Marsh Bypass Gate replacement.
- Complete the update to the Sheboygan County Park and Open Space Plan.
- Complete a parcel merger for the remaining two lots that are for sale of the Amsterdam Dunes. The merger will create a larger more marketable lot.
- Update the MS4 Program Plan.
- Apply for a State Stewardship grant to extend the Old Plank Road Trail as part of the State Highway 23 reconstruction project.
- Complete the US Forest Service tree planting grants at Amsterdam Dunes.
- Obtain the necessary approvals for the Amsterdam Dunes Wetland Mitigation Bank.
- Continue to offer the extremely popular Household Hazardous Waste Events.