2017 Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan Update

As of the end of September 2017, SEWRPC staff has completed the instream survey of Oak Creek's mainstem (13 river miles from the mouth at Lake Michigan in South Milwaukee to just upstream of West Woodward Drive in Franklin), the North Branch of Oak Creek tributary (5.5 river miles) and the Mitchell Field Drainage Ditch up to College Avenue (1.8 river miles). Field efforts completed include the following:

- Cross-section surveys at 166 locations on the three streams. This information will help assess the amount, quality, and diversity of instream habitat.
- During the instream survey, 101 erosion sites were identified and measured along the mainstem, 18 along the North Branch of Oak Creek and 14 along the Mitchell Field Drainage Ditch. These measurements will help estimate the amount of total suspended sediment and phosphorus that is entering the Creek and its tributaries due to bank erosion.

Work is also underway to analyze available information related to the Mill Pond and Dam in Grant Park. Historical information related to the Mill Pond and Dam has been collected and reviewed. An evaluation to quantify the amount of sediment that has accumulated in the Mill Pond as compared to its original volume when constructed in the early 1930s has been started.

SEWRPC staff have gathered the available sampling results on water and sediment quality and assembled these results into a group of data sets for analysis. Major sources of these data include the U.S. Geological Survey, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the City of Racine Health Department, and SEWRPC. To date, four data sets have been assembled:

- The surface water chemistry data set contains the results from over 5,690 water chemistry samples collected at 37 sites located on the mainstem of Oak Creek, the Mill Pond, and three tributary streams between 1952 and 2016.
- The macroinvertebrate data set contains the results from 64 samples collected at 29 sites located on the mainstem of Oak Creek, the Mill Pond, and three tributary streams between 1979 and 2015. It includes identification and counts of organisms such as stream insects.
- The emerging pollutants data set contains the results from 66 samples collected at five sites located on the mainstem of Oak Creek and one tributary stream between 1975 and 2016.
- The sediment quality data set contains the results from 35 samples collected at 13 sites on the mainstem of Oak Creek, the Mill Pond, and one tributary stream between 1976 and 2016.

And finally, an online survey has been developed to gather information on public concerns and priorities for improving the watershed. The survey was shared with the watershed's communities and the project stakeholder list. The survey is also available on the right hand side of the project website at http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/Environment/Restoration-Plan-Oak-Creek-Watershed.htm. The online survey will be open for public response until November 15th, 2017.

Field Work Photos

Oak Creek Mainstem – Downstream of Ryan Road – failing bank protection

North Branch Oak Creek – Downstream of College Avenue – low water levels and trash

Mitchell Field Drainage Ditch – Upstream of Rawson Avenue – beaver dam

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