Yahara WINS Executive Committee
June 13, 2017 Meeting

Agenda Item:
Yahara WINS Video

Background:
At the March 2017 Yahara WINS Group and Executive Committee meetings, there was strong interest in exploring the possibility of developing a Yahara WINS video that could serve multiple purposes. These include informing key audiences about the goals of Yahara WINS and inspiring participation in ways that advance the project’s objectives. Key audiences could include community members, agricultural producers, elected officials, business leaders and other stakeholder groups.

Yahara WINS had discussions with local video production firms to find out more about their capabilities and how best to structure a Request for Proposals (RFP) for preparing a video. The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District’s Communications Manager also provided input. A draft RFP has been prepared that reflects this input and is attached. It is anticipated that Yahara WINS will form a review team to assist with this project.

Options:
1. Issue the RFP as written with contact information and submission date provided by the Executive Committee, have the Yahara WINS workgroup evaluate proposals and select the successful proposal, authorize Yahara WINS to execute an agreement with the firm submitting the successful proposal and then begin work on the video.
2. Issue a revised RFP based on additional input from Yahara WINS, have the Yahara WINS workgroup evaluate proposals and select the successful proposal, authorize Yahara WINS to execute an agreement with the firm submitting the successful proposal, and then begin work on the video.
3. Gather additional information and bring that information back to Yahara WINS at a future meeting before Yahara WINS makes any decisions regarding development of an informational video.

Recommendation:
Issue the RFP as written and form a Yahara WINS workgroup to evaluate proposals, select the successful proposal and work with the selected company through the process. Authorize Yahara WINS to execute an agreement with the firm submitting the successful proposal contingent on the project not exceeding the $15,000 included in the 2017 approved WINS budget for communication.

This recommendation would allow the project to move forward in a timely manner. There would be benefits in that outdoor video footage could potentially be collected during the summer when plants are actively growing, colors are vibrant, etc.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

YAHARA WINS VIDEO PROJECT

The Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (Yahara WINS) will receive proposals for development of a three to five minute video production. Proposals should be sent to Yahara WINS c/o ___________ and should be marked “Yahara WINS Video Project”. Proposals will be received until 3:30 p.m. (local time) on _________.

Questions regarding this request for proposals shall be directed to Yahara WINS via email at _________ or telephone at _________.

YAHARA WINS BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Background information regarding the Yahara WINS Project is provided as Attachment 1.

PROJECT DETAILS
The three to five minute video will inform key audiences about the goals of Yahara WINS and inspire participation in ways that advance the project’s objectives. Key audiences include community members, additional agricultural producers, elected officials, business leaders and stakeholder groups.

This video is expected to be the first of a series anticipated over the project’s 20 year life. The shooting schedule will include efforts to document existing land use practices and surface water features in the Yahara Watershed (primarily Dane County). Interviews with 6-8 individuals (all located in Dane County) are anticipated. Script writing, voice talent options, graphics development and possible use of animation should be reflected in the RFP.

Uses for the finished production include public presentations and an online presence through The Yahara WINS website (currently hosted by MMSD) and other channels. Edited b-roll will be provided for potential use by the news media.

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN PROPOSALS
Proposals should include the total project cost, itemized costs, the types of equipment used, a general narrative, an estimated project timeline, contact information, links to videos that the proposing company has worked on that may be similar in content or focus to what is anticipated in this RFP and other relevant information.

RFP SELECTION AND AWARD
Yahara WINS will evaluate proposals received and will select the proposal that in Yahara WINS sole and absolute judgment, best meets the needs of Yahara WINS. Yahara WINS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
Attachment 1

Background Information Related to Yahara WINS
The Yahara watershed, like many others, is threatened by excessive phosphorus from sources such as agricultural runoff, urban stormwater and wastewater treatment plant discharges. The elevated phosphorus levels are a threat to water quality and aquatic life throughout the area.

The Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (Yahara WINS) began in 2012 as a four-year pilot project to reduce phosphorus loads and meet more stringent water quality standards established by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This groundbreaking program employs the strategy of watershed adaptive management in which all sources of phosphorus pollution work together to meet water quality goals. This strategy is more effective and less expensive than the sources working independently on solutions. Partners in Yahara WINS include cities, villages, towns, wastewater treatment plants, agricultural producers, environmental groups, among others.

This unprecedented level of collaboration from this diverse group of partners included significant financial contributions to fund a mix of rural and urban phosphorus reduction projects. Projects range from traditional solutions, such as stormwater retention ponds, harvestable stream buffers, and strip tillage, to innovative new solutions like low-disturbance manure injection.

The pilot project is completed and Yahara WINS is embarking on its next phase, a 20-year effort encompassing the full-watershed. Local governments have entered into an intergovernmental agreement which commits them to provide financial support for the project throughout this phase.

For more information visit madsewer.org/Programs-Initiatives/Yahara-WINS
Impaired Waters
Yahara River Watershed

Pollutant
- Sediment/Total Suspended Solids
- Sediment/Total Suspended Solids and Total Phosphorus

Pollutant data from WDNR 303(d) list (2010, proposed 2012). Watershed boundaries from 1:24,000-scale data (WDNR).

Yahara WINS Partners

**CITIES***
- Fitchburg
- Madison
- Middleton
- Monona
- Stoughton
- Sun Prairie

**VILLAGES***
- Cottage Grove
- DeForest
- Maple Bluff
- McFarland
- Shorewood Hills
- Waunakee
- Windsor

**TOWNS***
- Blooming Grove
- Burke
- Cottage Grove
- Dunn
- Middleton
- Pleasant Springs
- Westport

**OTHERS***
- MMSD
- Oregon-WWTP
- Stoughton Utilities
- UW-Madison*
- WDNR
- Clean Lakes Alliance
- DATCP
- USDA/NRCS
- Dane County
- USGS
- Madison Gas & Electric

* Indicates entities that own a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4)
Watershed-based, integrated solutions are the key to meeting increasingly stringent water quality objectives in a cost-effective manner. Real-world watershed projects are instrumental in validating this approach and generating momentum among other potential adopters.

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (the District) is helping to pioneer this approach with the Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (Yahara WINs) project, a collaborative initiative to meet water quality criteria for phosphorus. This project leverages a codified compliance option in Wisconsin, called Watershed Adaptive Management, in which point and nonpoint sources jointly implement strategies to reduce phosphorus loads at the lowest overall cost for the watershed. It is the first project in Wisconsin and the nation to use this approach as a permit compliance strategy. Since its inception in 2012, Yahara WINS has become a national model for the development of a successful watershed management program, with an unprecedented level of time and funding committed by a wide breadth of partners. The project is truly an embodiment of the One Water movement.

BACKGROUND

The District is a wholesale provider of wastewater treatment to 40 customer communities, serving a population of over 360,000 people in the greater Madison area. The District has traditionally been an early adopter of new practices to reduce pollutants with the dual goals of protecting the environment and saving residents money.

In 2010, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted stringent statewide numeric water quality criteria for phosphorus (.075 mg/L for streams and 0.10 mg/L for rivers), followed by
the development of a basin-wide TMDL for phosphorus that affected the District. Upgrading District facilities to meet these requirements would result in a $224 million investment, a cost that ratepayers would have to bear with little return on their investment since the District’s discharge point is downstream of its service area. Other wastewater treatment plants and municipalities operating municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) in the Yahara watershed also faced steep costs for brick-and-mortar compliance options.

**STRATEGY**

The District responded to the challenge by launching a four-year pilot project to test an innovative new regulatory compliance approach in Wisconsin: the Watershed Adaptive Management Option. Adaptive management allows wastewater treatment plants to work with other point and nonpoint sources of phosphorus in a watershed, including agricultural producers, stormwater utilities, and industries, to meet phosphorus water quality standards. This new compliance strategy had never been tested in Wisconsin prior to the pilot project, so the District was working without a blueprint.

Success depended on securing broad stakeholder participation. As a new compliance option, adaptive management was not widely understood, and the District needed to persuade potential participants to become active partners and commit funds to the project. District staff met individually with local municipalities and presented a convincing business case demonstrating that adaptive management could help participants collectively save millions of dollars per year while improving environmental outcomes. Though some communities were initially hesitant, the District eventually secured the participation of 21 MS4 communities, even though this committed them to a shorter compliance period than if they worked independently to meet their regulatory obligation.
The pilot project coalition also included four wastewater treatment plants, environmental groups, agricultural producers, an electric utility, Dane County, and the Wisconsin DNR. Participating entities contributed funding to the $3 million project, with contributions proportional to individual phosphorus reduction requirements. Money was invested in both traditional and innovative phosphorus reduction projects in agricultural and urban settings. Agricultural practices included the use of cover crops, harvestable stream buffers, and low-disturbance manure injection.

A robust water quality monitoring program, including newly installed USGS gauges and citizen volunteer monitors, established baseline conditions. Over 1,800 discrete water quality samples were collected during the pilot project, providing accurate phosphorus concentration and load information throughout the watershed. Monitoring parameters were expanded to include nitrogen in a proactive effort to generate information should future water quality criteria be developed for nitrogen.

OUTCOMES

The primary achievement of the pilot project was building a large cross-sector coalition that worked collaboratively to address water quality. The Yahara WINS partnership merged the resources and expertise necessary for a holistic watershed approach. Based on this accomplishment, the project has now moved to a full-scale adaptive management project, with coalition members committing to 20 years of participation and financial support for this initiative through execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement. The full-scale Yahara WINS project addresses phosphorus reduction...
in a 540 square-mile area, covering 23 municipal jurisdictions and three counties. Collectively, the partners will make a $104 million investment to improve water quality with a target phosphorus reduction goal of 106,000 pounds per year. An even stronger testament to community acceptance of this watershed approach is that MS4s who have already met their individual permit reduction requirements are also participating and providing funding.

For the District, the positive outcome of the Yahara WINS project has informed approaches to other regulatory requirements. The adaptive management program and the carefully constructed network can serve as a model for addressing other pollutants, such as chloride. The cost savings to the District’s ratepayers are significant: the Yahara WINS program investment is $24 million (in actual dollars over the program life), a plant upgrade would cost $224 million in actual dollars. Cost savings are also realized by other WINS participants with the savings ultimately passed to watershed residents. Conservative estimates show watershed residents as a whole will realize $13.5 million a year in savings.

The Yahara WINS project grew from a strong District commitment to One Water principles and a belief that, in addition being fiscally responsible, the District needed to serve as a strong environmental steward and leader in its watershed. The success of the project reflects the District’s ability to effectively engage other utilities, municipalities, environmental groups, and entities around a shared vision of collaboration, leading the way for other watershed-focused initiatives in the future.