

AFTER TMDL APPROVAL: THE NEXT STEPS IN THE LOWER FOX RIVER WATERSHED

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Introduction

Green Bay is the largest freshwater estuary in the world. All the waters within the Lower Fox River Basin drain to Green Bay. However, there are waters within the Lower Fox River Basin that are impaired due to high levels of sediment and phosphorus entering the waters. Impaired waters need to be corrected - - restored to fishable, swimmable, and designated use conditions as required by the U.S. EPA in the Clean Water Act.

All land uses within the Lower Fox River Basin, whether urban or rural, contribute a source of sediment and phosphorus to the waters within the basin to some extent, but in varying amounts. To determine the amounts of sediment and phosphorus being delivered to the waters, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) were developed and subsequently approved by EPA in May 2012 (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/tmdls/>). By knowing the amounts of sediment and phosphorus being delivered to a waterbody, and which areas or land uses contribute the most pollutants, resource managers can focus their restoration efforts in the watershed in order to achieve improved water quality.

TMDL Implementation Discussion

Within the Lower Fox River Basin, point sources (industrial, municipal, CAFOs, and stormwater) and nonpoint sources will be required to address their sediment and phosphorus loading to the Lower Fox River Basin. The TMDL will be implemented through existing regulations, financial incentives, and various pollution control programs. In addition, relatively new pollution control programs, including water quality trading and adaptive management, may be utilized by the permit holders and landowners within the Lower Fox River Basin to achieve these goals.

References

The Cadmus Group, Inc., March 2012. Total Maximum Daily Load and Watershed Management Plan for Total Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids in the Lower Fox River Basin and Lower Green Bay Report.

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