CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) was created in August, 1960, under the provisions of Section 66.945 of the Wisconsin Statutes. It exists to serve and assist the local units of government and their citizens in planning for the orderly and economic development of a seven-county region comprised of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

The Commission itself is composed of 21 members, three from each of the member counties, two of the three from each county being appointed by the Governor and one from each county being elected by the county board. Funds necessary to support the SEWRPC operations are provided by the member counties, and the budget is proportioned among the several counties on the basis of relative equalized assessed valuation. The SEWRPC is authorized to request and accept aid in any form from all levels and agencies of government for the purpose of accomplishing its objectives and is authorized to deal directly with the federal government for Section 701 planning grants. The SEWRPC present committee and staff structure is shown on Figure 1, page 2.

As the official research and study agency for one of the nation's large urbanizing regions, the SEWRPC is charged with the responsibility of accomplishing research and coordinating planning on areawide development problems as distinguished from local development problems, to formulate and recommend solutions to such problems, and to ultimately suggest a general development plan for the Region. Such research and planning activity is intended to serve as a basis for the extension of assistance and advice to the local units of government. Thus, equipped with research studies and well-thought-out plans, the SEWRPC can communicate with governmental units as requested and speak from a background of factual information about problems which cannot be properly resolved within the framework of a single municipality or even a single county.

Drainage and flood control is one such areawide problem, and officials and citizens who are daily involved in the problem have come to realize that it can only be resolved within a regional framework of study and analysis where local governments can join hands in cooperative efforts. Drainage and flood control is a problem which is intensified by urbanization and which requires that a planning area smaller than the Region but larger than the individual counties, namely, the watershed or drainage basin, be recognized and considered as a unit. Storm water drainage and flood control facilities must form a single integrated system over an entire watershed, a system capable of carrying both the present runoff loads generated by the existing land use patterns in the watershed and the
future runoff loads that may be generated by changing land use patterns in the watershed. In addition, the drainage and flood control problem is closely related to other watershed problems, such as: water quality and stream pollution; low flow augmentation; soil erosion and stream siltation; land use, not only with respect to the stream channel and its floodways and flood plains, but also with respect to the entire watershed; land and water conservation and management practices; park and open space reservation; fish and wildlife habitat conservation and management; sewerage and sewage disposal; and water supply. Prac-

Figure 1

EXISTING STAFF & COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Extricating solutions to any one of these basic problems must, therefore, simultaneously consider solutions to the other water-related problems and needs. Thus, any effective water-related planning program must recognize watersheds as integrated land–water resource units which create a complex community of interests among their residents.
Solutions to these and other water-related problems within southeastern Wisconsin require, therefore, the development of specific programs for the comprehensive study of each watershed within the seven-county planning Region. The ultimate purpose of these watershed studies is to develop workable plans to guide the staged development of drainage and flood control, sewerage, water supply, water quality, soil and water conservation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and recreation and open space facilities within each watershed. These facility plans are to be based upon a long-range land use plan for the watershed. If the studies are to assist local officials and citizens in formulating and deciding upon multi-purpose facility plans, factual information must be developed on the overall potential needs for such facilities as well as upon the major determinants of such needs.

Recognizing that any comprehensive watershed study program covers a broad spectrum of resource related interests and governmental programs, the SEWRPC has established two types of advisory committees to assist the Commission in its work.

The first type is represented by a single committee known as the "Technical Advisory Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Design." This committee was established in January, 1962, and includes representatives from the following agencies with active resource related programs in southeastern Wisconsin:

**Federal Government**

U. S. Geological Survey

U. S. Corps of Engineers

Soil Conservation Service

**State of Wisconsin**

Department of Resource Development

Conservation Department

State Committee on Water Pollution

Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Geological and Natural History Survey

Highway Commission
Public Service Commission

Board of Health

Local

Metropolitan Sewerage Commission of the County of Milwaukee

Milwaukee County Park Commission

Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission

Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

One of the main purposes of the "Technical Advisory Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Design" is to place the experience, knowledge, and resources of the represented federal, state, and local agencies at the disposal of the second type of committee -- the local watershed committee. To date two such local watershed committees have been formed under the auspices of the SEWRPC: the Root River Watershed Committee and the Fox River Watershed Committee. It is the Commission's hope and intention that in time such watershed committees, representing local interests, can be formed for each major watershed within the seven-county planning Region. The purpose of these watershed committees is to bring the knowledge of local personnel possessing broad experience in the various facets of watershed development and land use planning to bear on the specific problems of each watershed.

The Fox River Watershed Committee is the second such local watershed committee to be formed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Membership on this committee includes elected and appointed county, city, village, and town officials, property owners, and other citizen groups and agricultural interests. The Fox River Watershed Committee was organized on November 8, 1962, and spent its first 18 months in the following activities: conduct of informational meetings to acquaint the full committee with the problems of the watershed, a field trip in the watershed, the formation of a steering committee, and meetings with county board committees in each of the four counties within the watershed. The informational meetings included presentations by representatives of federal, state, and local water and water-related resource agencies on such subjects as: watershed planning concepts, water quality and pollution, water law, water supply, flooding, and recreation and open space preservation. At its meeting on May 27, 1964, the committee was informed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers that favorable consideration of federal participation in flood control works could only be considered within the frame-
work of multipurpose projects based upon comprehensive watershed planning efforts.

After careful review of its work and findings over the 18-month period, the Committee unanimously recommended that a prospectus for a comprehensive Fox River watershed planning program be prepared under the aegis of the steering committee with additional representation as necessary from such agencies as the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; U. S. Corps of Engineers; Wisconsin Conservation Commission; and the Wisconsin State Board of Health. The steering committee held its first meeting for this purpose on June 29, 1964, and has held bimonthly meetings from that date to the present. This Prospectus and its recommendations are the work of the committee.