Sheboygan River Area of Concern Habitat Restoration Projects
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

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The Sheboygan River flows 81 miles through eastern Wisconsin and discharges into Lake Michigan at the City of Sheboygan. In 1985, the lower Sheboygan River and Harbor was designated an Area of Concern (AOC) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of water quality and habitat degradation that occurred due to urbanization and the historical discharge of pollutants into the AOC. The City of Sheboygan, Sheboygan County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) are currently implementing the three habitat restoration projects along the lower Sheboygan River that address the elimination of habitat related Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) associated with the AOC designation. Between October 2011 and April 2012, a Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) project team that includes Inter-Fluve developed related conceptual, preliminary and final habitat restoration designs, while working with a variety of local stakeholders and participating in public information meeting.

Three sites, encompassing 73 acres and nearly 2 miles of shoreline, were targeted for restoration along the lower Sheboygan River, which include the: (1) Kiwanis Park Shoreline Site, (2) Wildwood Island Area Site, and (3) Taylor Drive/Indiana Avenue Site. Although degradation issues vary by location, the causes of the BUIs include stream bank erosion, sedimentation, habitat fragmentation, invasive plants, urban land use, and urban storm water impacts. Restorative measures include shoreline stabilization and development of habitat using woody debris (anchored log jams); bioengineering bank stabilization; removal of invasive plants and replacement with native species; and strategic placement of boulders and gravel banks within the stream to provide fisheries habitat and address sediment issues. The improvements are designed to enhance migratory and shore bird stopover and breeding, herptile breeding, warm water fisheries, and fish and wildlife populations.

The Taylor Drive / Indiana Avenue Project Area includes the development of a restored wetland within an approximately 6 acre pond that was constructed as a wetland mitigation site for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the early 1990s. The specific restoration goals for this site include developing connectivity between the Sheboygan River and newly constructed riparian wetlands, and improving fish and wildlife habitat within the wetland complex.

Construction of improvements, which are being funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), were initiated in June 2012 and are scheduled to be substantially complete in Spring 2013. SEH and Inter-Fluve are assisting the City of Sheboygan in overseeing the construction of the habitat restoration improvements.