

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT – Frequently Asked Questions

Striving to meet environmental compliance at the lowest possible cost to the community, NEW Water is working in the watershed “outside the fence” as never before. In efforts to reduce nutrient loading into our waters, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is implementing more stringent phosphorus discharge requirements for point sources –such as NEW Water. In the Bay of Green Bay, NEW Water is responsible for less than 3% of the total phosphorus loading, with 97% coming from other point sources, storm water, as well as nonpoint sources. To meet new phosphorus requirements, NEW Water would need to construct additional treatment processes which would cost upwards of \$220 million. DNR has offered another option: Adaptive Management (AM), which allows point sources to partner with nonpoint sources to reduce phosphorus. NEW Water has launched AM with a pilot project in Silver Creek, a predominantly agricultural sub-watershed of the Lower Fox River Basin. Over five years, NEW Water and its partners will attempt to reduce total phosphorus in the Creek. Project results may lead NEW Water to a long-term commitment to AM, which could mean cleaner waters for the community.



What is the Silver Creek Pilot Project?

- NEW Water’s pilot project will evaluate the feasibility of nutrient and sediment runoff reduction in an agricultural watershed. The project will inventory, monitor, and implement conservation practices.
- Numerous grants and funding support have been contributed that will allow NEW Water and partners to test improved field practices, restore wetlands, and execute more detailed sampling and monitoring.
- About 950 soil samples and 800 water samples were taken in 2014 to serve as baseline data for phosphorus content and source. This data will help landowners identify areas for improvement on their property and select practices best suited to their fields.

Who is NEW Water partnering with on water quality solutions?

- NEW Water is partnering with numerous entities including industry, other wastewater treatment facilities, municipalities, counties, universities, tribes, academia, private agronomists, and agriculture. The Silver Creek Project is primarily an agricultural sub-watershed. Agriculture provides a great opportunity for achieving success in improving water quality.
- Agriculture offers win/win solutions to improve water quality and improve agriculture profitability through conservation practices like nutrient management, in-field practices, and edge-of-field practices.
- A high percentage of phosphorus and sediment delivery to Green Bay occurs from a small number of runoff events in the spring and early summer when the soil is unprotected. Land management practices can help prevent this.
- Partnering with nonpoint sources can yield less costly, and more environmentally sustainable water quality solutions for a community.

Why would a wastewater treatment facility be working outside its facility or service area?

- NEW Water is evaluating nutrient reduction options that have the greatest impact on phosphorus and sediment delivery to Green Bay and are the most cost effective options for its customers.