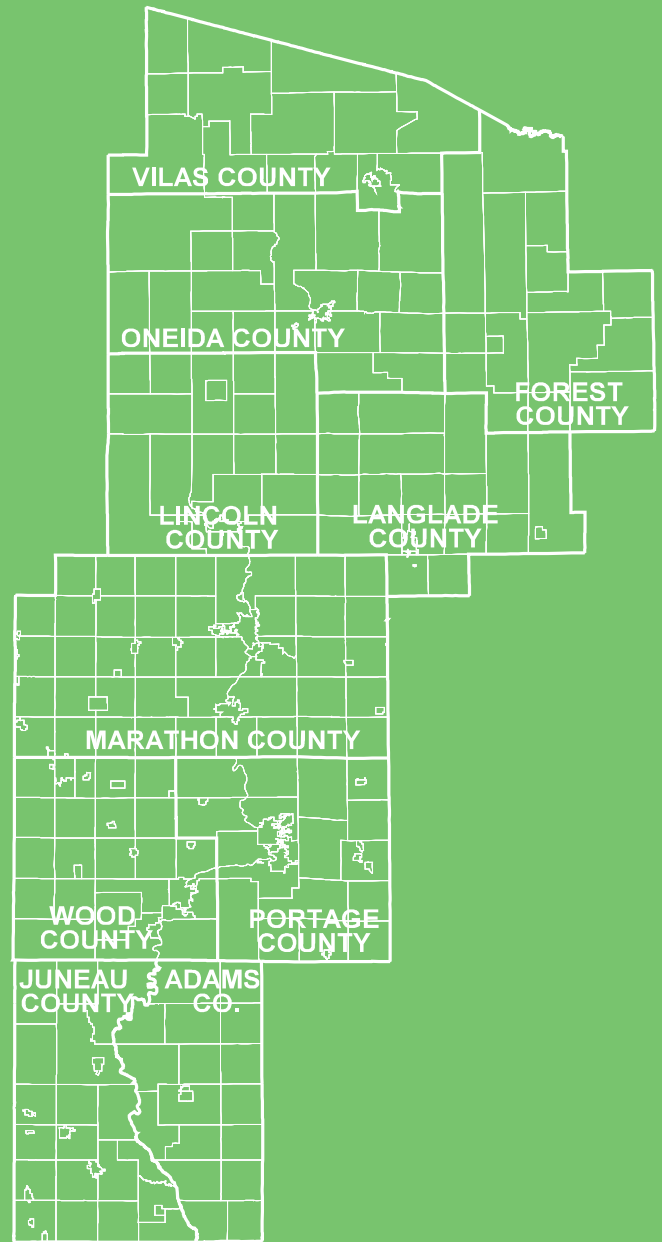


North Central Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission



Area Served →



Membership

- 10 counties
- 22 cities
- 42 villages
- 195 towns
- 4 tribal nations

Regional Facts

- 449,751 2023 population (DOA estimate)
- 9,325 square miles



NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

210 McClellan Street, Suite 210, Wausau, Wisconsin 54403
Telephone: (715) 849-5510 Fax: (715) 849-5110
Web Page: www.ncwrpc.org Email: staff@ncwrpc.org



SERVING ADAMS, FOREST, JUNEAU, LANGLADE, LINCOLN, MARATHON, ONEIDA, PORTAGE, VILAS AND WOOD COUNTIES

Summer 2024

Hello North Central Wisconsin!

It is our pleasure to present the **2023 Annual Report** for the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). This is our 50th Annual Report! For half a century we have been providing planning assistance throughout the region to help create a better future for us all.

The Annual Report is prepared to provide interested local, state, and federal officials as well as citizens with an overview of the activities undertaken by the NCWRPC over the last year. In addition, the report meets the requirements as outlined in Wisconsin Statute 66.0309(8)(b) for annual report preparation.

Throughout the document you will see many regional and local level projects we completed this past year. In total, over one hundred regional and local level projects were completed. The Annual Report highlights our five core work areas:

- Economic Development,
- Geographic Information Systems,
- Intergovernmental Cooperation,
- Land Use, and
- Transportation.

With your continued support, we look forward to another successful year in 2024 and beyond. Feel free to contact us should you have any questions regarding the Annual Report or the NCWRPC.

Remember, working together everyone achieves more!

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul & Millan".

Paul Millan
Chairperson

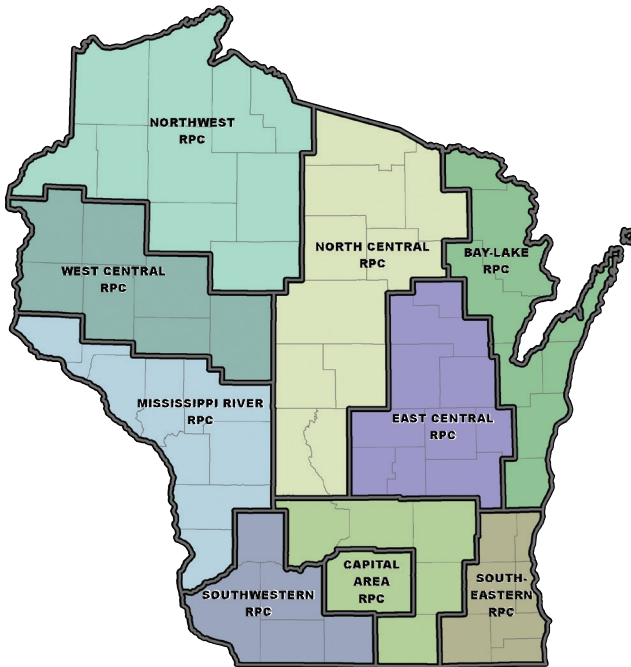
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis Lawrence".

Dennis Lawrence, AICP, EDFP
Executive Director

Purpose and History:

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was created in 1973 under Wisconsin Statute 66.0309 by the ten counties of Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood as a voluntary association of governments with the purpose of preparing plans for the physical development of the Region and its communities; to conduct research; to serve as a data center; and serve as a forum for communication, cooperation and coordination among federal, state, regional, and local interests; and to provide technical assistance.

Regional planning commissions provide assistance throughout the state. NCWRPC is one of nine regional planning commissions serving Wisconsin, while nationwide there are about 500 similar regional organizations.



Mission Statement

NCWRPC offers cost-effective, specialized planning services and expertise to counties and communities to support resilient development throughout the Region. Additionally, we lead and assist with collaborative efforts that address shared challenges and opportunities to create a better future for all.

Organizational Goals:

NCWRPC maintains and regularly updates a Strategic Plan, as well as other related plans. Some of the goals from these plans are to:

- Provide cost-effective planning services to our members,
- Assist communities with state and federal requirements,
- Communicate benefits of regional and local planning,
- Advance sustainable and resilient growth,
- Leverage state and federal dollars, and
- Continue to adapt to the future needs of the Region.



State and Federal Relationships

NCWRPC is an independent area-wide planning agency created by state statute that is governed by an appointed board, called a Commission, and serves the counties, towns, villages, cities, and tribes within the Region. In addition, there are two long-standing relationships with the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the federal U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), that support planning.

In 1975, NCWRPC was designated as a rural transportation planning region by the WisDOT. As such, the NCWRPC receives a planning grant annually to provide transportation planning assistance to support the state transportation work program throughout the Region. In 1980, the NCWRPC was designated as an economic development district by EDA. The NCWRPC also receives an annual economic development planning grant to provide local economic development assistance and prepare a regional report called a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which helps maintain eligibility for EDA grants.

Types of Assistance

NCWRPC is a regional planning and economic development agency, which provides assistance to local governments throughout the ten-county Region in the areas of economic development, geographic information systems (GIS), intergovernmental cooperation, land use planning, and transportation. The NCWRPC supplements existing staff or takes the lead where there is no staff. The goal is not to duplicate efforts but rather provide an effective system of planning to fit each community's needs.

The NCWRPC undertakes both regional and local planning projects. Regional accomplishments are highlighted on page 6 and 7, while Local Assistance projects by county are highlighted on pages 8 through 9.

Publications

NCWRPC annually prepares and publishes several planning documents. The NCWRPC also prepares a quarterly newsletter, NCWRPC NEWS, which is provided to over 1,100 people, including county supervisors, chief-elected officials, clerks and many other interested parties throughout the Region, state, and nation. Numerous special alerts and updates are prepared as well. A list of plans, reports and other information is available at the NCWRPC website. See www.ncwrpc.org.

Program Areas:

NCWRPC provides assistance both regionally and locally in the following five areas:

ED

Economic Development

NCWRPC annually prepares a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that analyzes the economy and identifies potential economic development projects. This report maintains the Region's eligibility for U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration public works programs. Other federal and state programs utilize this plan as well. NCWRPC also prepares EDA grant applications, among others, to bring funding into the Region.

NCWRPC provides local communities with assistance in a variety of other economic development related studies, including preparing detailed economic development plans that examine the local economy, assess local trends, and identify strategies to spur development. In addition, the NCWRPC provides grant writing and administrative assistance to communities that are seeking funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, as well as a variety of other grant programs, including WEDC, DNR, WisDOT, and USDA-Rural Development.

GIS

Geographic Information Systems

NCWRPC is a depository for a variety of demographic information for the area, including U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Economic Census, State Employment and Labor Information, and other specialized data sets. A Regional GIS database and computerized mapping system, including digital orthophotography, is also maintained. NCWRPC also coordinates efforts to acquire regional and statewide orthoimagery, including securing partnership funding.

NCWRPC maintains an extensive digital mapping database for local mapping. Custom data sets and maps can also be created for communities on request or as part of larger planning efforts. County Profiles are also prepared and updated as needed. Also, in partnership with WEDC, NCWRPC prepares quarterly economic development reports for each county in the Region using Lightcast, specialized economic development analysis software. In addition, the NCWRPC provides redistricting assistance throughout the Region.



LU

Land Use

NCWRPC is responsible for the development of a regional comprehensive plan for the ten-county Region. The Regional Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2004, the first regional comprehensive plan in the state under the new planning law. That plan was last updated in 2015 with a five-year mid-plan review prepared in 2020. NCWRPC also prepares other regionally focused plans from time to time.

NCWRPC prepares a variety of plans for local communities, including outdoor recreation plans, all hazard mitigation plans, land and water resource management plans, sewer service area plans, wellhead protection plans, and wildfire protection plans, among others. In addition, the NCWRPC assists local governments in the preparation of comprehensive plans under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, as well as assistance with zoning and land division ordinances that implement local plans.

IGOV

Intergovernmental Cooperation

TR

Transportation

NCWRPC prepares regional transportation plans including highway corridor studies, long-range urban area plans, parking studies, county-wide bicycle planning, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans, and grant writing for various WisDOT funding sources. The NCWRPC also provides on-going assistance to the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

NCWRPC assists local governments in a variety of areas, including the preparation of local road improvement programs. These road plans provide a capital improvement schedule for upgrading local roads and help local units obtain Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) funding for road reconstruction projects. Pavement rating and other assistance with the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program is also available.

NCWRPC is available to conduct specialized studies on request. Over the years, a wide range of studies have been completed on subjects such as merging ambulance services, community consolidation, economic impact analysis, and boundary agreements. Many of these projects include a regional focus because they involve multiple units of government. The NCWRPC also maintains a website and produces a regular newsletter to provide information and other resources. In addition, four quarterly meetings are held to discuss various issues in the Region.

Regional Accomplishments

NCWRPC prepares, undertakes and manages several regional efforts.

Below are some of the highlights of these efforts:

- Prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Performance Report to maintain the Region's Economic Development District designation, as defined by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- Maintained designation as a rural transportation planning region by WisDOT to coordinate transportation strategies on a regional basis, as well as assist local governments prepare and submit required road ratings.
- Awarded a multiyear Regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant from WisDOT to fund our regional program to improve walking and biking conditions for schools throughout the Region.
- Secured an additional \$1M for a total of \$5.6M for the regional Main Street Bounce Back (MSBB) program to promote business recovery following the pandemic. Provided 43 \$10,000 grants in 2023 directly to businesses throughout the Region.
- Developed an Entrepreneurial Portal to promote small business growth in the Region. Stems from a partnership with CREATE Portage County.
- Continued a partnership with WEDC to provide Lightcast/EMSI economic development modeling tools to communities within the Region. Prepared quarterly regional reports.
- Provided organizational support to various entities within the Region, including Centergy, NCWDC, NEWCOM, NCWSC, NRTC, and WROC. See the next page.
- Staff initiated discussions with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to explore watershed level planning for the Upper Wisconsin River Basin.
- Continued implementation of our Regional Livability Plan as a framework for county and local comprehensive planning efforts.
- Maintained and developed a Regional Mapping Information System, Census and Demographic Information, and a Planning Library for the Region.
- Continued implementation of our Regional Bike Plan, which stems from our Regional Livability Plan, as a framework for county and local level bike and pedestrian planning efforts.
- Staff represent the Region on two state level boards appointed by the Governor, one related to broadband and another related to 911 Emergency Communications.

NCWRPC is involved in various other regional efforts throughout the year that are not mentioned here.



On-going Regional Organizational Support:

NCWRPC provides assistance to a variety of organizations to support or complement planning efforts throughout our Region.

Centergy

Provide staff support to Centergy, a regional economic development organization serving Adams, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties. Centergy strives to leverage the collective economic power of its five counties to unite efforts to attract talent and development to the area.

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC)

Provide management assistance for a revolving loan fund operated by the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation, which provided gap financing to businesses throughout the Region. The Regional Development Fund was funded by a USDA - Rural Development loan and is in the process of being phased down. Only two active loans remain.

Northcentral Wisconsin Stormwater Coalition (NCWSC)

Provide staff support to the NCWSC. The Northcentral Wisconsin Stormwater Coalition is a group of 14 communities that coordinate education and outreach efforts to improve water quality in the Central Wisconsin River watershed.

North East Wisconsin Public Safety Communication (NEWCOM)

Provide staff support to NEWCOM to manage and coordinate the organization to promote better emergency communication and response throughout a 16-county Region. This includes Sheriff's Offices, 911 Dispatch Centers, and others.

Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)

Provide staff assistance to the NRTC. The mission of the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is to sustain and enhance safe, reliable, and efficient rail service critical to the businesses, communities and economies in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Wisconsin Regional Orthophotography Consortium (WROC)

Provide leadership to this effort. It first began as a regional effort in 2005 and now spans the entire state of Wisconsin. This is a collaborative effort to gather orthoimagery for various applications including addressing, emergency 911 systems, and land use planning. The effort is conducted every five years. In addition, over 100 local units of government participate, as well as a variety of state and federal funding partners.

Selected Accomplishments by County 2023

Reflected below are some projects completed or underway within our ten-county Region. Note the Main Street Bounce Back Program (MSBB) reference in some counties.



Adams County

- ✓ County Broadband Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Outdoor Recreation Plan
- ✓ Maintain County Online Records System
- ✓ Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Census Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS)
- ✓ MSTC Campus EDA Grant Application assistance
- ✓ Rural Partners Network Collaborator
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ Road Rating for Village of Friendship & Town of Leola

Forest County

- ✓ County Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County GIS & Parcel Mapping Assistance
- ✓ County Highway Road Rating
- ✓ Mole Lake All Hazard Mitigation Plan
- ✓ Census Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS)
- ✓ Rural Partners Network Collaborator
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ Road Rating for City of Crandon and Towns of Crandon, Hiles & Nashville

Juneau County

- ✓ County-wide Housing Assessment
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ WisDOT Grant Application for Omaha Trail Improvements
- ✓ Village of Necedah Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Census Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS)
- ✓ Town of Cutler WisDOT Road Application
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 3 Businesses

Langlade County

- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Broadband Mapping
- ✓ County GIS and Land Records Assistance
- ✓ County Outdoor Recreation Map
- ✓ NTC Wood Technology Center EDA Grant Application Awarded
- ✓ Town of Rolling Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Town of Ackley WisDOT Bridge Grant Application
- ✓ Census Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS)
- ✓ State Parcel Submission assistance
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 3 Businesses
- ✓ Road Rating for the Towns of Antigo, Elcho, Polar, Rolling & Upham

Lincoln County

- ✓ County Broadband Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Land Use Update
- ✓ County All Hazard Mitigation Plan underway
- ✓ City of Tomahawk Road Rating
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Award to 1 Business
- ✓ Road Rating for the Towns of Birch, King, Merrill, Russell, Scott & Tomahawk

Marathon County

- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Specialized Transit Needs Assessment
- ✓ County Regional Forensic Center planning support
- ✓ Wausau Safe Routes to School Plan underway
- ✓ Town of Rib Mountain Incorporation Mapping Assistance
- ✓ Town of Marathon WisDOT Road Grant Application
- ✓ City of Mosinee Interactive on-line Zoning Map
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 12 Businesses
- ✓ Road Rating for the Towns of Harrison, Johnson, Marathon, Reid, Rib Falls, Spencer, Weston & Wien

Oneida County

- ✓ County Outdoor Recreation Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ Town of Stella Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Town of Crescent Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Maintain Online County Survey Records System
- ✓ Census Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS)
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 8 Businesses
- ✓ Road Rating for the Towns of Crescent, Lake Tomahawk, Pelican, Schoepke & Stella

Portage County

- ✓ County Broadband Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Village of Rosholt Comprehensive Plan assistance
- ✓ MSTC AMETA Center EDA Grant Application Awarded
- ✓ SPRINT Grant with CREATE Portage County
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 7 Businesses
- ✓ Road Rating for the Villages of Park Ridge & Rosholt and the Towns of Dewey, Lanark, Plover & Stockton

Vilas County

- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Outdoor Recreation Plan
- ✓ County All Hazard Mitigation Plan
- ✓ Lac du Flambeau Tribe EDA Grant Application Awarded
- ✓ Town of Arbor Vitae WisDOT TAP Grant Application for Trails
- ✓ Town of Plum Lake Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Award to 1 Business
- ✓ Road Rating for County Highways

Wood County

- ✓ County Broadband Plan
- ✓ County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
- ✓ County Bike & Pedestrian Plan underway
- ✓ County Housing Study underway
- ✓ Town of Saratoga Development Strategy & Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Wisconsin Rapids EDA Redevelopment Planning Partner
- ✓ Quarterly Economic Reports
- ✓ MSBB Awards to 8 Businesses
- ✓ Road Rating for Towns of Port Edwards & Sigel

Staff also attend various meetings, respond to inquiries, provide assistance to a variety of departments, agencies, and organizations, and completes numerous projects throughout the Region not mentioned above.

Audited Financial Statements:

Each year the NCWRPC engages an independent auditor to provide an examination of financial operations. A copy of the complete Audit Report and Management Communications Letter is available for review at the NCWRPC Office. Below is the December 31, 2023, Statement of Net Position:

ASSETS	
Current Assets	2,394,874
Receivables	280,480
Prepaid Items	21,587
Noncurrent Assets	2,321
Capital Assets	<u>17,546</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,907,123
TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS:	\$533,024
LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities	592,000
Long-Term Liabilities	<u>329,721</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$921,731
TOTAL DEFERRED INFLOWS:	\$325,932
Investment in Capital Assets	7,090
Unrestricted	<u>2,025,079</u>
TOTAL NET POSITION:	<u>\$2,032,169</u>

Annual Levy Rate

By state statute the membership charge or levy rate to local governments cannot exceed 0.003% of equalized real estate value. At its highest, the rate was set at 0.00275% in 2000, but has since been reduced multiple times. By 2023, that rate was reduced to 0.000635%, which is well less than one third of the statutory limit! In addition, to level out the wide range of member counties total valuations, the NCWRPC established a cap level. The NCWRPC continually seeks other revenue sources to minimize costs to our members.

Leveraging Funds

To keep membership contributions low, additional funds are secured from other sources to operate the organization. A simple Return on Membership (ROM) analysis shows that every membership dollar provided to the NCWRPC leverages additional dollars. In 2023, for every 1 dollar the NCWRPC received from membership it directly leveraged over 6 dollars from grants, local projects, and other sources.

Year Highlights

Anniversary



The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2023. Founded in 1973, as the ninth regional planning commission in the state, NCWRPC has been providing planning assistance to the Region for fifty years. We thank all of you for your continued support and are looking forward to the next fifty years!



Main Street Bounce Back Grants

The Main Street Bounce Back (MSBB) program was one of our efforts to help the North Central Wisconsin economy recover, especially our small businesses, following the pandemic. In partnership with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), we provided funding to area entrepreneurs that moved or expanded their business into a vacant commercial space. Eligible businesses could receive \$10,000 to help cover various expenses such as rent, operating expenses, building repairs, and improvements.

In 2023, the final year of the program, 43 MSBB grants were awarded in addition to the 517 awarded in 2021 and 2022. A combined 560 businesses were awarded grants for a total of \$5.6M of investment into our Region.

Staff

Dennis Lawrence, AICP, EDFP, Executive Director

Dennis became the Executive Director in 1997. He has a bachelor's degree in public administration from UW-La Crosse and a master's degree in urban planning from UW-Milwaukee. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and is also certified as an Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP). Dennis provides overall management to the organization and works in all areas of planning.

Christian Boulanger, Planner

Christian started work with the NCWRPC in 2023. He has a bachelor's degree in public administration from UW-La Crosse and dual master's degrees in public administration and urban planning from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. Christian works mainly in the areas of economic development and land use.

Andrew Faust, GISP, Senior GIS Analyst

Andy has worked with the NCWRPC since 1995. He has a bachelor's degree in urban and regional studies from UW-Oshkosh. He is also certified as a Geographic Information System Professional (GISP). Andy works in the areas of GIS and land use.

Fredrick Heider, AICP, Planner

Fred has worked with the NCWRPC since 2004. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources and land use from UW-Stevens Point and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Fred works mainly in the areas of land use and transportation.

Dawn Johnson, Office Assistant

Dawn has worked with the NCWRPC since 2021. She has an associate degree in accounting from Northcentral Technical College. Dawn provides program support, staff support, and general office assistance.

Darryl Landeau, AICP, Senior Planner

Darryl has worked with the NCWRPC since 1993. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources from UW-Stevens Point and a master's degree in urban studies from Mankato State University. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Darryl works mainly in the areas of land use and transportation.

Eric Sonnleitner, Planner

Eric has worked with the NCWRPC since 2017. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources and land use from UW-Stevens Point. Eric works in the areas of economic development, GIS, land use, and transportation.

Samuel Wessel, AICP, Senior Planner

Sam has worked with the NCWRPC since 2022. He has a bachelor's degree in environmental science from Wisconsin Lutheran College, and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Sam works in the areas of economic development, housing, and land use.



Commissioners:

An appointed commission oversees the activities of the executive director and the organization. As detailed in Wisconsin statutes, three commissioners from each member county govern the NCWRPC. One is selected directly by the County (C), one directly by the Governor (G), and the third is a Joint (J) selection between the County and Governor. Term ending is also displayed; however, note that all serve until reappointed or replaced. Commissioners listed are current as of December 31, 2023.

NCWRPC officers are Paul Millan, Chairperson; Loretta Baughan, Vice-Chairperson; and Ron Nye, Secretary - Treasurer.

Adams County

Rocky Gilner, C (6/30)
Pending, G (6/28)
Rick Pease, J (6/26)

Forest County

Bill Chaney, C (1/26)
Paul Millan, G (1/30)
Cindy Gretzinger, J (1/28)

Juneau County

Betty Manson, C (6/25)
Pending, G (6/29)
Pending, J (6/27)

Langlade County

Ronald Nye, C (1/25)
Angela Close, G (1/28)
Reinhardt Balcerzak, J (1/25)

Lincoln County

Eugene Simon, C (6/25)
Loretta Baughan, G (6/27)
Hans Breitenmoser, J (6/29)

Marathon County

David Oberbeck, C (6/27)
Pending, G (6/29)
Craig McEwen, J (6/31)

Oneida County

Steve Schreier, C (1/26)
Ted Cushing, G (1/28)
Harland Lee, J (1/24)

Portage County

John Pavelski, C (1/29)
Larry Raikowski, G (1/27)
Allen Haga, Jr., J (1/25)

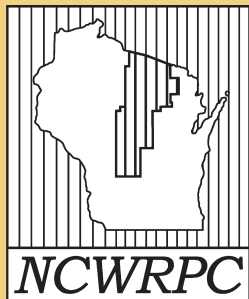
Vilas County

Robert Hanson, C (1/25)
Holly Tomlanovich, G (1/29)
Pending, J (1/27)

Wood County

Jason Grueneberg, C (6/29)
Doug Machon, G (6/27)
Dave LaFontaine, J (6/25)

In addition, per Wisconsin Statute, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) - Missy Hughes - is an ex-officio officer of the NCWRPC.



50th Annual Report

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
210 McClellan Street, Suite 210 • Wausau, Wisconsin 54403
Phone: 715-849-5510 • Fax 715-849-5110
www.ncwrpc.org