warbler

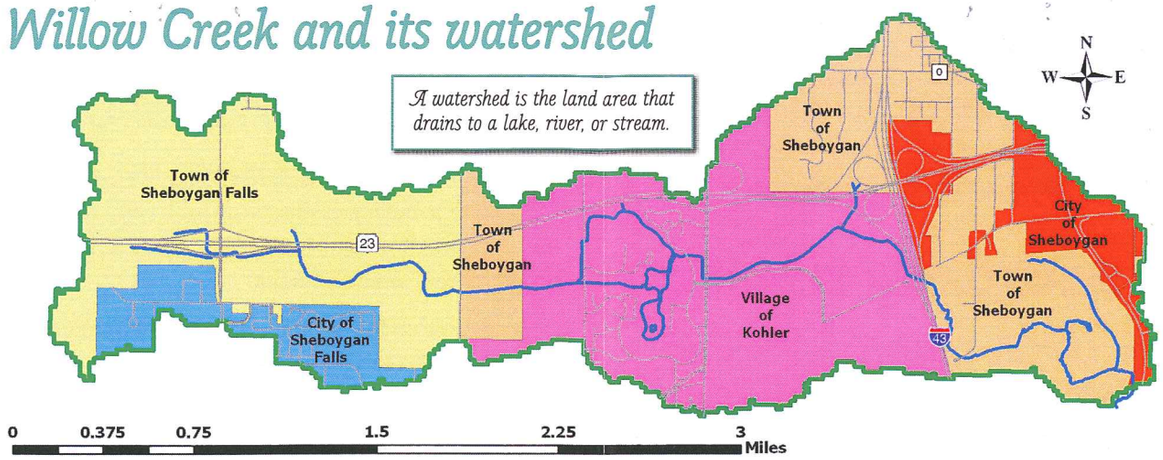
ow Creek, like many rivers and streams, is tened by stormwater runoff and degraded habitat. Stormwater runoff is rainwater that flows across the surface of the land or from ops, roads and parking lots and into our storm rs and ditches. As the stormwater flows, ants are picked up such as road salt, auto fluid ings, chemical weed killers, grass clippings, soil, tter. Stormwater from sewers and ditches flows akes, rivers or streams – polluting our waters time rain falls or snow melts.

at threatens ow Creek?

abitat along Willow Creek is threatened by opment that continues to nibble away at the ctive corridor of trees, shrubs and other plants the stream. Additionally, soil erosion from ruction sites and crop fields makes the water y and covers fish spawning beds.

y, Willow Creek has a resiliency fed by cold, groundwater and can be preserved if citizens ommunities work together for its protection.

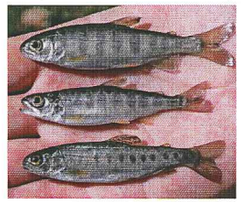
Willow Creek and its watershed



In 2008, about 70% of Willow Creek's 2,700-acre watershed was characterized as undeveloped or agricultural land, while residential areas, urban areas, and two major highways filled the remaining 30%. Monitoring showed that Willow Creek's water quality is at risk if care is not taken at this critical time in the watershed's history. Numerous partnership opportunities abound for improving water quality and protecting Willow Creek as the watershed becomes more urbanized.

Willow Creek West of I-43

On the west end, the creek is significantly altered from its natural state. The stream was straightened and rocks and branches removed. In 1988, a survey of fish species was conducted upstream (west) of I-43. Warm-water forage fish species, such as blacknose dace and longnose dace were found, but no trout or salmon.



(From top): coho, chinook and steelhead fry

Willow Creek East of I-43

On the east end you will see a naturally functioning stream with trees over the creek, rocks and fallen branches. Between 2002 and 2006, biologists collected data on habitat, fish and insects. Four-inch fry of chinook, coho, and steelhead trout were found. Biologists realized that Willow Creek has "critical habitat" and deemed this area to be a naturally functioning stream capable of salmon and trout fry reproduction.

Rain garden

Storm drain stenciling

Stream clean-up

Stream monitoring

ke action to protect Willow Creek

- Write to your alderman or town board about the need to protect Willow Creek.
- Assist SRBP with water quality monitoring of Willow Creek.
- Enroll in SRBP's Adopt-A-Stream program and become a Friend of Willow Creek.
- Promote development that protects water resources.
- Build rain gardens and buffer strips to help rainwater soak into the ground, instead of running off into waterways.
- Avoid dropping and pouring items into storm drains.
- Talk to your city officials about creating stormwater ordinances and designing bioswales that capture pollutants.
- Encourage your municipality to manage stormwater on a regional or watershed basis.
- Ask your municipality about stenciling storm drains with "Dump No Waste."
- Pick up litter, or join a river clean-up event.

SRBP mission

The Sheboygan River Basin Partnership (SRBP) is a non-profit organization working to cultivate partnerships to raise public awareness, engage participation in stewardship, and promote sound decision-making regarding issues that affect the health of water resources in the Sheboygan River Basin. The organization is an alliance of conservation and environmental groups, local businesses, agency staff and concerned individuals.

YES! I AM INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE AND HELPING WILLOW CREEK IN SOME WAY. PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH INFORMATION ABOUT HOW MY I MAY HELP RESTORE AND PROTECT THIS UNIQUE RESOURCE.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

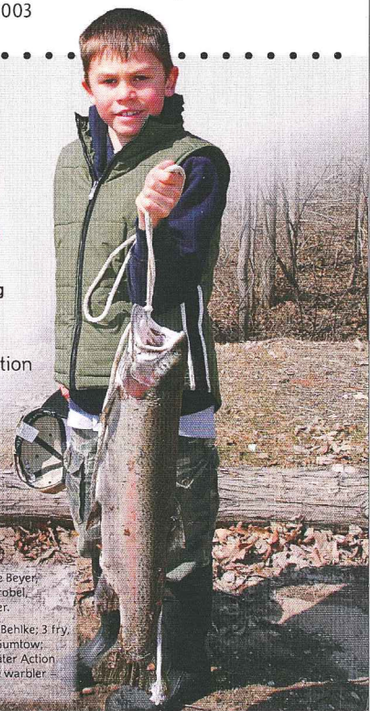
PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Clip and mail to: Sheboygan River Basin Partnership, PO Box 3, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085-0003

Sheboygan River Basin PARTNERSHIP

www.sheboygan rivers.org



Produced by SRBP in cooperation with the UW-Extension Basin Education Initiative.

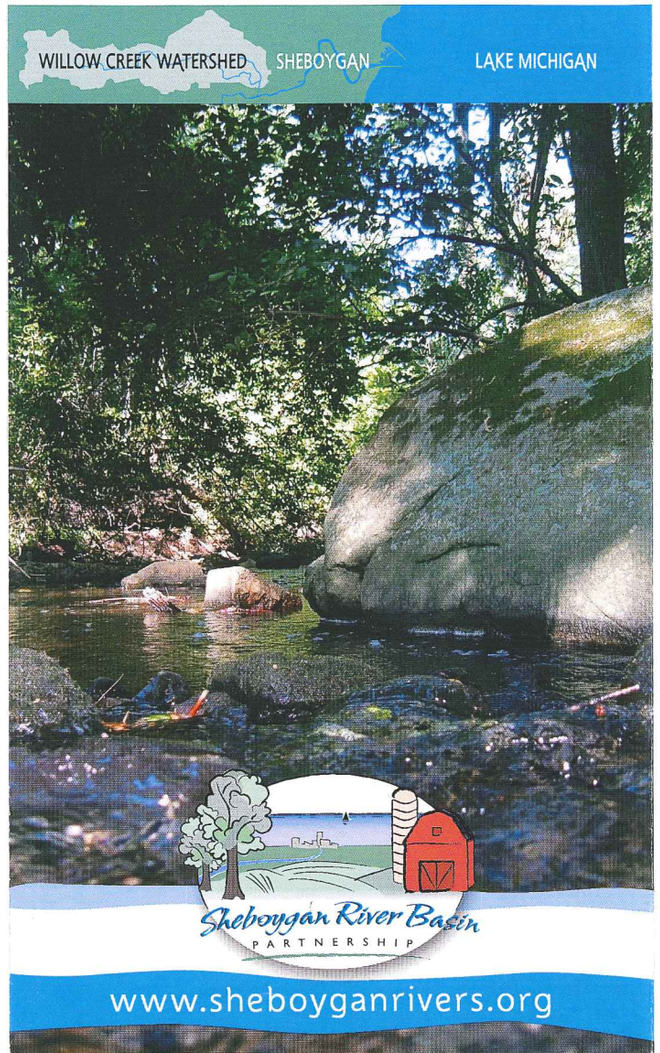
UW Extension

Brochure development coordinated by Debbie Beyer, UW-Extension. Graphic design by Jeffrey J. Strobel, UW-Extension Environmental Resources Center.

Photo credits: front & inside panels – Barbara Behlke; 3 fry, boy with fish & Willow Creek clean-up – Jon Gumtow; drain stenciling – Deb Beyer; monitoring – Water Action Volunteers; rain garden – Ellen Rulseh; Myrtle warbler – Jeffrey J. Strobel.

Willow Creek

An opportunity to protect our clean water heritage



P.O. Box 3
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085-0003

What makes Willow Creek unique?

Willow Creek is a five-mile stream that represents the only Lake Michigan tributary in Wisconsin with naturally reproducing chinook and coho salmon, and it is one of two Wisconsin tributaries to Lake Michigan with reproducing steelhead trout.

You can watch the salmon and trout migrate up this cold water stream in the spring and fall to spawn. Better yet, you can see baby fry migrating downstream to Lake Michigan!

Willow Creek is unique because it is connected to naturally cold groundwater that allows fry to survive and migrate out to Lake Michigan without help from people. Most streams in Wisconsin that support trout and salmon are intensively managed by biologists.

Willow Creek needs our special care today to be preserved for generations tomorrow. Contact SRBP to become involved!

BASIN FACTS:

The Sheboygan River Basin encompasses 620 square miles in parts of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Ozaukee, and Sheboygan counties. The Basin includes six watersheds and is named after the major river in the watershed. Willow Creek is a tributary to the Sheboygan River. The Natural Heritage Inventory documented 67 rare plant and animal species, and 24 rare aquatic and terrestrial communities within the Basin.