



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Tony Evers
Governor of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers:

Thank you for your nomination of a site for inclusion into the National Estuarine Research Reserve System for Wisconsin. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has completed its review of the site nomination package to ensure compliance with program regulations. I am pleased to accept this nomination from the State of Wisconsin for the proposed site that encompasses portions of the Green Bay estuary, including the Peshtigo River, Lower Bay, and Sturgeon Bay components.

The proposed site would add significant new habitat types to the system and is the first proposed site in the Lakes Michigan and Huron biogeographic subregion. Also, the site will be an asset to research, education, and stewardship opportunities for the citizens of Wisconsin, as well as contribute to the effective management of valuable coastal resources.

I commend the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay for a comprehensive nomination report that addressed the site selection principles established in the research reserve system's regulations. The next steps are for the state, as the lead, to both assist NOAA in preparing a draft environmental impact statement, as well as begin preparing a draft management plan. The environmental impact statement will evaluate the nominated site and its alternatives – and examine the potential impacts of designating a research reserve. NOAA has provided pre-designation funds, matched by the state, to support both of these tasks. The next phase will ensure the effort complies with all applicable Federal and state environmental statutes.

Thank you again for your continued interest in and support of NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve System. While NOAA accepts this nomination for a research reserve site, Federal designation of the site is contingent upon successful completion of the environmental impact statement and management plan, as well as adequate annual appropriations to support a new reserve in Wisconsin.

THE ADMINISTRATOR



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I look forward to our continued collective progress in the development of the proposed site. If you have further questions, please contact Makeda Okolo, Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-4981 or makeda.okolo@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Spinrad", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator