

Ben Niffenegger graduated from University Wisconsin – Stevens Point with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management & Land Use Planning. He joined Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) in 2011 and after serving in a variety of environmental roles, currently co-runs the company as the Executive Officer, Strategy & Regulatory. WVIC is FERC licensed to operate the Wisconsin River Headwaters Project which encompasses 21 storage reservoirs comprised of more than 50 named lakes. The extensive reservoir system is managed to maintain as uniform a flow as practicable in the Wisconsin & Tomahawk Rivers and a reasonable balance among the benefits the water resource provides including water conservation, flood control, low flow augmentation, hydroelectric generation, water quality, wildlife, and recreation. While publicly chartered by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1907, WVIC is privately owned and funded by the hydroplant owners on the WI River.

Along with responsibility for environmental and regulatory compliance related to water quality, cultural resources, recreation, fish & wildlife, and land management, Ben also oversees stakeholder engagement, licensing, strategic planning, legal coordination, and a variety of corporate functions. WVIC has historically been actively involved in coordinating operations throughout the Wisconsin River Basin and in recent years formed and led the Wisconsin River Relicensing Committee which took a basin-wide approach to request and receive license extensions for 20 hydropower developments with 10 different owners on the Wisconsin River for better alignment and coordination during the upcoming relicensing process.

As a current member of the Regulatory and Legislative Committee and potential MHUG Board Member, Ben looks forward to continuing to work with dam owners, licensees, consultants, agencies, and other stakeholders on complex hydropower challenges and opportunities throughout the Midwest.