

Cecily Cunz, AICP

Project Manager



EDUCATION

M.U.P.P., Urban Planning & Policy, University of IL – Chicago

B.S., Business Administration, University of IL – Urbana-Champaign

Joined Firm in 2023

Years of Experience: 15

CERTIFICATION

Certified Planner, American Institute of Certified Planners

McKinsey & Company Latino Management Accelerator: Adaptability & Resilience; Problem Solving; Strategy

Geospatial Analysis & Visualization Certificate, University of IL, Chicago

ASSOCIATIONS

American Planning Association (APA)

Illinois American Planning Association (ILAPA)

Cecily is a seasoned professional who brings a wealth of expertise in planning and policy development. She has become a recognized expert in watershed and green infrastructure planning, helping communities navigate complex environmental challenges and achieve meaningful restoration outcomes. As an AICP-certified senior environmental planner, Cecily's track record of success is underscored by her ability to lead diverse stakeholder groups in driving impactful environmental improvements within their localities. Her dedication to a holistic watershed approach and sustainable solutions has resulted in significantly improved water quality, green infrastructure, and habitat uplift in the communities with which she has worked.

Cecily has partnered with numerous communities to develop 15 watershed plans across the Midwest and successfully won millions of dollars in grant funding to help those communities restore their water and natural resources. She served as Project Manager for the Pike River Watershed Plan, the first USEPA-approved watershed plan in Wisconsin, the Kickapoo Creek Watershed-Based Plan in Peoria County, Illinois, and the Central South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed-Based Plan in DeKalb County, Illinois. She also led the development of approved watershed-based plans for the Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River, the North Branch Milwaukee River and portions of Milwaukee River, Catfish Creek, Keith Creek, Crystal Creek, Lower Little Rock Creek, Mahoney Creek, Long Run Creek, Wind Point, Spring Creek, Flint Creek, and Woods Creek watershed plans across Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. In addition, Cecily led a planning and visioning process to develop the Sunnyside Park Sustainability Initiative in Bloomington, Illinois, a trail and greenway network in Coles County, Illinois, and another to develop the Sugar Creek Greenway Vision Plan in McLean County, Illinois.

Cecily was a keynote speaker at the DeKalb County Watershed Stewardship for Leaders program (2026), the McHenry County Water Forum (2025), the Kickapoo Creek Festival (2025), the Enhancing Countywide Infrastructure Planning – A Leap Day Event (2024) in DeKalb County, and the Flint Creek/Spring Creek Watersheds Partnership Conference (2023). She has also presented at the 2026 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, ASCE Illinois Valley Branch Spring Luncheon (2025), the 2025 Illinois Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Management Conference, and several Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership and Fox River Ecosystem Partnership meetings.

WATERSHED PLAN REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS

DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District, IL

Central South Branch Kishwaukee Watershed-Based Plan

Cecily worked closely with the District and stakeholders to develop an IEPA-approved Watershed-Based Plan for the Central South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed. This watershed includes the City of Genoa, Villages of Kirkland and Kingston, and unincorporated communities of Wilkinson, Five Points, and Colvin Park. The watershed boasts uncommon ecosystems in need of protection, including floodplain forests, a fen, grassland birds, fish, and mussels. The mission of the watershed plan is to improve water quality by reducing nonpoint source pollution, while preserving agricultural lands and improving habitat, and increasing local knowledge to help improve stewardship of the Central South Branch Kishwaukee River watershed.

Fox River Ecosystem
Partnership, Secretary

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, IL

Kickapoo Creek Watershed-Based Plan

Cecily worked with the Commission and Steering Committee to lead the development of an IEPA-approved Watershed-Based Plan for the Kickapoo Creek Watershed. The watershed is over 300 square miles in Peoria, Knox, and Fulton Counties and includes the City of Peoria west of the Illinois River, Kickapoo Creek, 14 named tributaries, and 55 unnamed tributaries. Jubilee College State Park, at the heart of the watershed, is part of the Illinoian drift plain and is deeply eroded into many complex valleys. Today, Kickapoo Creek faces several urgent concerns, including four impaired/303d-listed stream reaches, deteriorating water quality, deteriorating ecological conditions in its many ravines, and excessive erosion. The Kickapoo Creek Watershed-Based Plan exists to inspire people to restore its ecosystems and water quality by reducing nonpoint source pollution, protecting and restoring natural resources, and promoting broad stewardship of the watershed so that future generations can enjoy the unique natural beauty, and the economic and recreational opportunities of a healthy Kickapoo Creek for decades to come.

Village of Algonquin, IL

Woods Creek Watershed Plan and Green Infrastructure Implementation

Cecily worked with the Woods Creek Watershed Committee, formed by the Villages of Algonquin, Lake in the Hills, Crystal Lake, and the Crystal Lake Park District, and secured Illinois EPA Section 319 funding to develop a USEPA Nine Element-compliant Watershed-Based Plan focused on restoring and protecting the Woods Creek watershed. Serving as Project Coordinator, the Village of Algonquin led a collaborative effort that engaged stakeholders and established a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN), along with strategies for land acquisition, ecological stewardship, and resource protection. The resulting plan has become one of Illinois' most successful watershed initiatives, leveraging more than \$2.5 million in grant funding for stream restoration projects and helping protect and steward nearly 2,000 acres of green infrastructure. Our team continues to support implementation through ecological stewardship, watershed restoration, and funding assistance.

DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, IL

Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Improvement Plan*

Project Manager/Author of the development of an IEPA-approved comprehensive Watershed-Based Plan. This plan served as a guiding document to facilitate the achievement of water quality standards by controlling nonpoint source pollution and restoring the impaired waters within the USBKR watershed. Throughout the planning process, Cecily worked alongside diverse stakeholders, fostering voluntary collaboration and emphasizing the importance of protecting green infrastructure, implementing ecological restoration, and public education. The process culminated in the creation of the Watershed Improvement Plan, which integrated input from stakeholders, steering meetings, and the expertise of AES's ecologists, GIS specialists, and environmental engineers. This innovative plan not only aimed to enhance water quality but also sought to improve the quality of life for current and future generations in the USBKR watershed. Cecily's role encompassed strategic planning, collaboration facilitation, and a commitment to adaptive management principles, ensuring the plan's long-term effectiveness and flexibility while recognizing that all recommendations were provided as guidance rather than mandatory directives.