



McHenry County Endorses Plan to Improve Water Quality in the Fox River

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WOODSTOCK, IL: At the October 4th County Board meeting, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the Fox River Implementation Plan (FRIP). The FRIP is to eliminate water quality impairments, specifically phosphorus and nuisance algae, in the Fox River from the Stratton Dam in McHenry to the Dayton Dam in Ottawa, flowing into the Illinois River. The Plan was developed in partnership with the Illinois Environmental and Protection Agency (IEPA) to bring the Fox River in compliance with the water quality standard goals as defined by the Clean Water Act.

The water quality impairments in the Fox River is due to phosphorous loads from both agricultural areas and urban stormwater. According to the Fox River Group Study, there are more than 20 major municipal wastewater discharges to the portion of the Fox River. Exacerbating the levels of contamination is runoff from phosphorous fertilizers, which contributes to a total phosphorous load of approximately 1.29 million pounds per year to the affected area. Dams along the Fox River significantly alter the river and contribute to pollutants and algae growth.

The FRIP takes a stakeholder-driven approach to research and identify solutions to eliminate water impairments in the Fox River. The FRIP is a product of more than a decade of extensive planning, data collection and scientific assessments. The Plan is a collaboration between the IEPA, Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS), county and municipal governments, water reclamation districts, watershed and environmental groups. Some of the goals of the FRIP are the following:

- Eliminate all water quality impairment associated with dissolved oxygen, total phosphorus and nuisance algae for the Fox River to come into compliance with water quality standards.
- Work in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to study and plan the removal of the Carpentersville and North Aurora dams.
- Offer guidance and support to urban and rural landowners and decision-makers alike for reducing the water quality impairments and fertilizer pollution.

Reducing pollutant loads from upstream, waste water treatment plants, agriculture and urban areas will improve water quality. Based on the goals of the FRIP, the near-term actions should result in measurable reductions in nuisance algae, as well as a significant reduction in total phosphorus concentrations in the river. "Local farmers rely on our water resources to grow crops and support livestock," said Natural and Environmental Resources Committee Chair and Illinois Farm Bureau Board Member Michele Aavang. "The Plan is critical to ensure we practice environmental stewardship and achieve water quality improvements in the Fox River".

The executive summary of the FRIP is available [here](#).

