

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION PROGRAM TASK FORCE
McHenry County Administration Building
667 Ware Road
Woodstock IL 60098
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008 MEETING NOTES

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

The meeting began at 2:00 p.m. Attendees and participants included representatives from municipalities, townships, various organizations/agencies, County Board Members and interested public. Ms. McKinney began the meeting by welcoming participants and thanking them for their continued support.

SUBCOMMITTEE FINAL REPORTS

Stakeholder Standards: Kathy Johnson, Riley Township Trustee presented the report on the Stakeholder Standards. Because of the sensitivity of our groundwater aquifers to contamination and the future water needs within the County, procedures and standards are needed to ensure that all stakeholders have access to quality and a sustainable quantity of water. Stakeholders need to have a vested interest in these standards in order to obtain the desired results. All citizens, business entities and corporations within the County are stakeholders. People and businesses cannot exist without a water supply. As part of the 1996 amendments to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, major emphasis was placed on consumer awareness about drinking water quality. IEPA statute provides government entities with the ability to regulate recharge areas. This can be used by municipalities and counties to monitor community, business, commercial, agri-businesses and individual or private wells within the CWS's delineated recharge areas. There is a large area of the County that has a rural population that will not be affected by any local governing bodies. It is our recommendation that a county-developed "protection plan" be adopted to protect water resources in rural areas that are not enforceable by municipal governing bodies. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires states to develop and implement a source water assessment program to track potential sources of contamination, vulnerability to contamination and inform the public of these results. All community water supplies are required to conduct periodic self-monitoring. These reports are available on the IEPA website and include amounts of contaminants that are acceptable or not and the likely source of contamination. It would be in the County's best interest that this data be used to denote a baseline to watch for changes and patterns so the County can be proactive making decisions concerning water safety. The County should develop a framework of the necessary programs to implement recommendations contained within report 4, County wide Decentralized Wastewater Management Plan of the County of McHenry Groundwater Resources Plan. The recommendations are comprehensive and specific to the needs of McHenry County. The County should utilize existing water quality analysis information to proactively monitor for any trends and identify and water quality testing analysis that may be required to further our understanding of the potential of any natural or manmade influences that may negatively impact our groundwater.

Most estimates of private residents' water usage are based upon population and are estimated per person usage. There are no standards in place in regard to quantities used. As data is gathered, we should be able to monitor changes in the water supply and develop the standards needed. This would be an ongoing process. Conservation measures can be put in place to delay the need for any type of structured water rate system. High impact water uses such as irrigation, mining, green houses, landscapers, golf courses, sod farms and any agri-business or high impact water user would be required to help gather data for future water needs. There is a cost involved to set up a metering system for high impact users and there will be staff needed to develop the program. Studies show how this type of program increases efficiency of water use and saves money for the users. Some of the recommendations of the Stakeholder Standards included avoiding shallow well contamination, the Water Resource Department should utilize existing water quality analysis information from all available resources, adopt a Well Head Protection Plan, Education of all stakeholders, increase protection zones, well and septic results should be forwarded to the County, establish standards for well and septic inspectors, complete well and septic inspections at the time property changes ownership and funding assistance for wells and septic systems that need upgrades.

Impacts on Natural Systems: A report will be available for review on the web page at a later date.

Wastewater Effluent Reuse: Task force members were provided an update on Wastewater Effluent reuse. Specific topic areas included Sanitary Sewer Plant Effluent Reuse. Groundwater Protection goals include promoting groundwater recharge, provide recycled water for irrigation, reduction in the use of groundwater for peak demands and reduction in supply capacity to meet peak demands. There are some existing programs in Algonquin, Richmond and Huntley. Applicable regulations are handled by IEPA Land Application Regulations and State and County Health Departments. Hurdles to overcome include regulatory requirements for wastewater discharge and capital costs for reuse infrastructure.

Alternatives include model effluent reuse ordinance and model treated effluent as non-potable water source. It was recommended that all county jurisdictions that operate sanitary sewage treatment plants are strongly encouraged to

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institute a Sanitary Sewer Effluent Reuse program. These programs encourage the use of effluent for irrigation. Recommended uses include golf course irrigation and commercial development landscape irrigation during dry periods. Recommendations from previous subcommittees will be posted on the web page for those interested.

County-wide Contingency Planning: Larry Brown provided an update on the County-wide Contingency Planning. The goal of the sub-committee was to develop guidelines for Water Service Providers that will prepare them for water emergencies such as long term power outage, drought/water table changes, and contamination due to accidental incursion of hazardous compounds (MTBE), terrorist action and naturally occurring elements such as radon and sulfur. Existing programs include ILWARN – Illinois Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, primarily designed for municipalities, IPWMAN – Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network, designed for all other public/private water utilities. Some communities, such as Marengo may have established a disaster plan, which includes contact lists and resources, however, none have adopted a formal “mutual aid” agreements. There are no existing regulations requiring a water service provider to prepare an emergency plan. There is an implied contract between a water supplier and their customers that they will do whatever is necessary to provide service continuity. It is doubtful that suppliers have a documented methodology to follow. Hurdles to overcome include; providers must document their available resources as an initial step, this will require manpower and time, A hierarchy of contacts must be established for remediation or escalation, intergovernmental agreements must be created between appropriate suppliers and a decision must be made on the level of county involvement whether to require compliance to these guidelines by ordinance passed by the County Board and to publish guidelines, making providers and the public aware of the need for compliance with the use of public knowledge to stimulate municipalities to follow the county’s lead. Alternatives include allowing water suppliers to make their own plans and to work with one or two suppliers that lead by example. Details of the report are available on line for those interested.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON: No update provided.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: Ms. McKinney reported that she recently attended the CMAP RWSPG meeting and a meeting about Stormwater Infiltration and Wisconsin’s Runoff Standards (NR 151 Subchapter 3).

Adam Lehmann reported that the McHenry County Division of Transportation held a Snow and Ice Workshop in December. There is a need for operator training, especially the private operators who oversalt their sites.

The issue of Water Softeners as a source of chlorides was mentioned. Water softener discharge has been banned and or regulated by some States. However, in McHenry County, there is a need to have some solutions in place prior to making any such recommendations. A salt less water conditioner and iron removal system is being tested in the County. The system will be tested for a three month period to monitor its results. Task force members noted the need to be cautious as we need to make sure the system is safe and to find out if it uses any chemicals, and if so, the effects of the chemicals being used in their systems. Some communities in the United States are considering restricting the use of softeners within their communities, especially those communities that currently use a community softening system. There is definitely a need for different technology to address this issue.

A question was asked about Pharmaceuticals and personal care products disposal. These items must be handled by a police force as they are controlled substances and these are highly regulated. Current disposal programs are operating at the Fox River Grove and Johnsburg Police Departments.

Recent CMAP meeting on the Deep and Shallow Aquifer Systems: there is definitely a need to work together to find solutions. One area would be for intergovernmental cooperation would be well placements and optimizing well locations. Comments were made that there is a need to put some teeth into the regulations for everyone. The next CMAP meeting has been scheduled for January 27th at 9:30a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2009. The purpose of this meeting will be for public comment on the Pavement De-icing Draft Policies and Handbook.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 3:37 p.m.