

## **CHARGE TO REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING GROUPS**

This paper seeks to outline some of the fundamental expectations of the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (DNR-OWR) and the Scientific Surveys for the Regional Water Supply Planning Groups (RWSPGs) and their facilitating agencies to support the regional water supply planning initiative outlined in the Governor's Executive Order 2006-01.

Adjustments to these expectations may occur during the planning process to assure that initial plans are produced in June 2009.

The water supply planning and management initiative described in Executive Order 2006-01 orders that locally based Regional Water Supply Planning Groups in two of the state's Priority Water Quantity Planning Areas be organized and participate in the development of a regional water supply plan. To develop a regional water supply plan requires two foundations: 1) knowledge of available water supply, and 2) forecasts or scenarios of future water demand. The State Water Survey and the State Geological Survey, Illinois' primary scientific research agencies for groundwater and surface water resources, have been assigned responsibility for updating and expanding water resource information in each Priority Water Quantity Planning Area. The Regional Water Supply Planning Groups are assigned responsibility for the development of water demand scenarios to 2050.

### **The State Water and Geological Surveys.**

Information on each region's currently available and possible future water supply will be provided by the State Water Survey with support from the State Geological Survey. The information will be compiled from existing data and reports, new studies, new and revised models, etc., to provide the regional planning group with information on the available water supply. It is anticipated that all areas in each region will not have the same level of detail with respect to available water resources.

Certain water resource components have been targeted for detailed evaluation. In northeastern Illinois, the deep bedrock aquifer system underlying the entire region and the shallow sand and gravel and upper bedrock aquifers (shallow aquifers) and the Fox River in the Fox River Basin are targeted. In east-central Illinois, the Mahomet bedrock valley aquifer system and the Sangamon River are targeted.

The Water Survey will develop a website and make available all relevant data and information via the internet. It also will determine current water withdrawals and uses and identify and make preliminary evaluations of the impacts of

drought, climate change, and other risks and uncertainties on the water resources in each planning region.

The Surveys will attend meetings of the RWSPGs, provide technical and scientific support, and engage in education and outreach on water supply planning.

The future water demand scenarios, as developed and provided by the regional planning groups, will be compared by the State Water Survey to the available water supply scenarios to produce information on water supply conflicts. Water supply conflicts may arise where future water demands may exceed water supply or where other influences or factors will affect future water supply. Water quality issues relevant to water supply planning will be addressed.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC).

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning in northeastern Illinois and the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium in east-central Illinois are contracted with DNR-OWR for receipt and disbursement of grant funds (i.e. fiscal agents) on behalf of and in support of the regional planning group activities. This includes providing support staff, project management, the hiring of consultants if necessary, covering certain meeting expenses and providing technical assistance to the regional group and planning process.

State law requires that DNR-OWR grant funds for RWSPG activities to a legal entity. In practice, OWR expects each RWSPG to take responsibility for conducting appropriate activities in support of the regional water supply planning initiative.

CMAP / MAC may and will provide guidance, technical analyses, and facilitation to and for the regional planning group as needed to help assure that the water supply planning process meets its charge in a timely manner within budget constraints.

The DNR Office of Water Resources.

The DNR Office of Water Resources will attend each meeting of the RWSPGs to monitor progress and offer an appropriate level of guidance to RWSPG members. The OWR representative will be available to respond to questions as desired by RWSPG members, either during RWSPG meetings or individually.

The DNR Office of Water Resources will monitor progress of scientific work to be

performed by the State Water Survey and State Geological Survey in support of the water supply planning initiative.

The DNR Office of Water Resources in coordination with the State Water Survey will act as needed to assure that activities and work by all involved entities are conducted in an integrated and mutually supportive manner.

The DNR Office of Water Resources, in coordination with the State Water Survey, will define a comprehensive program for state and regional water supply planning and management and develop a strategic plan for its implementation over the course of this 3-year pilot program.

### The Regional Water Supply Planning Groups (RWSPGs)

DNR-OWR granted state funds for each RWSPG and CMAP/MAC to provide future water demand scenarios to the year 2050 for their respective regions. Why the regional groups? The RWSPG members have the best information regarding economic plans, future development, and ideas about growth for their region in the future. These growth plans and ideas for the future will require water supply. Because all water resources available for development have a finite capacity for supply, it is being left to the planning regions to recommend how best to accommodate the future water supply demands from a regional point of view. *The development and finalizing of water demand scenarios is the primary objective for the regional planning group desired by DNR-OWR.* DNR-OWR strongly suggests that this problem must be defined before meaningful solutions can be proposed.

Fundamentally, this is a WATER SUPPLY - WATER DEMAND STUDY.

Any other water issues that the regional planning group may decide to examine are at its discretion.

DNR-OWR expects each RWSPG to take responsibility to cause the planning process outlined in the Executive Order to succeed. Success with the bottom-up water supply planning process depends on the RWSPG members. This is the opportunity for local leaders, thinking regionally, to take responsibility for the success or failure of preparing a reasonable, logical plan for meeting future growth of water demands.

Each RWSPG is charged with responsibility to make findings, decisions, or recommendations in a water supply plan that represent general consensus and that are in the best interest of the entire region represented.

DNR Office of Water Resources (DNR-OWR) charged the Chicago Metropolitan

Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC) with soliciting members and with forming each regional group respectively. The RWSPG may draft governance bylaws or otherwise choose how they shall discuss, deliberate, and decide any relevant matter or issue that may come before them. The RWSPG may have technical advisors, appoint sub-committees of members and/or nonmembers to focus on a certain issue or question as needed or desired. The RWSPG meetings should be open to the public.

DNR-OWR also charged the CMAP and MAC to take initial steps to secure the necessary technical resources to work with each RWSPG to develop water-demand scenarios.

### The regional water supply plan

At the end of the planning period, DNR-OWR expects the regional planning group to develop a document, a regional water supply plan, that describes water supply and water demand issues of the region. Definition of and possible solutions to issues related to the probable areas of water supply conflict or areas of water supply deficit will be at the discretion of the regional planning group. The Executive Order indicates the overall planning effort should be consistent with existing laws, regulations, and property rights.

At this time, DNR-OWR suggests that the regional plan contain, but is not limited to, the following principal components:

A description of the planning region's currently available and possible future water supply. This section would draw extensively from the work done by the State Water and Geological Surveys in support of this initiative and include as appropriate their documents and deliverables.

A description of the planning region's water-demand scenarios. This section would draw extensively from the technical work done for consideration by the RWSPG. Technical products should be included as appropriate in this section or as an appendix.

A description of the water supply deficits or conflicts as found by work of the State Water Survey. Regional planning group findings regarding these conflicts should be included.

A description or listing of possible options for water supply/demand management as determined by the RWSPG to meet the future water needs. Technical and scientific support may be requested as needed from the SWS, SGS, CMAP / MAC, and DNR-OWR. This component should include any preferred option or recommendation and accurately reflect the desires and general consensus of the RWSPG.

The regional planning group is expected to use CMAP/MAC assistance for writing, editing, and printing the regional plan.

It is anticipated that additional planning and water quantity studies will occur in subsequent planning cycles in these regions as well as in other priority water quantity planning regions of the state. The ultimate goal is an integrated mosaic of regional water supply plans, appropriate for each region that will guide planners and water supply entities in taking appropriate courses of action to provide and assure adequate water supply of clean water at reasonable cost for all of Illinois' citizens.

by Department of Natural Resources  
Office of Water Resources  
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