



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

312-454-0400 (voice)
312-454-0411 (fax)
www.cmap.illinois.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Date: September 1, 2010

From: Tim Loftus, Principal Planner, Water Resources

Re: Watershed Planning in the Fox River Basin

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the delegated authority for the region's areawide water quality management plan.¹ CMAP is obligated, therefore, to outline management strategies for eliminating point- and nonpoint-source pollution, protecting groundwater, and disposing of wastewater throughout the seven-county region. CMAP, as did the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission before it, uses a collaborative watershed approach to planning that seeks to protect and/or remediate water quality.² Water pollution prevention and groundwater protection is the shared responsibility of state and local governments (and individual farm operators too for controlling agricultural nonpoint-source pollution.)³

CMAP entered into an agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to complete four watershed-based plans within the Fox River Basin. Watershed planning will commence in September in Blackberry Creek and Ferson-Otter Creek watersheds (Lower Fox River, Kane and Kendall counties) and in Sleepy Hollow Creek and Silver Creek watersheds (Upper Fox River, McHenry County). Funding for these projects was provided by the IEPA through Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

¹ NIPC, 1979 (as amended). Areawide Water Quality Management Plan. Volumes 1 and 2.

² A watershed planning approach often addresses other related natural resource (e.g. open space, habitat, etc.) or built-environment (flooding, stormwater runoff, etc.) management issues in a complementary fashion. In so doing, a watershed plan can be multiobjective.

³ *Ibid* 1. Also: Illinois EPA, Bureau of Water. 1992 (as amended). Illinois Water Quality Management Plan.

Watershed plans funded by the CWA must meet certain federal requirements as described in the CMAP/IEPA publication titled, *Guidance for Developing Watershed Action Plans in Illinois*. In concert with CMAP's mission to do integrated planning, newer regional planning criteria will also be addressed including an exploration of groundwater protection strategies. As such, groundwater-dependent county and municipal governments are urged to participate in these planning forums.

The Conservation Foundation (TCF), Environmental Defenders of McHenry County (EDMC), and the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) are partners in the planning process and have received grants from CMAP. TCF and EDMC will serve as local watershed coordinators in the Lower Fox and Upper Fox watersheds respectively, convene local stakeholders and execute an outreach plan. FREP will support the outreach and education effort by upgrading their subwatersheds webpage, highlight watershed planning activity in their e-newsletter – "Downstream" and host a Noon Network in each of the four watersheds. The Fox River Study Group is also involved as the hydrologic and water quality simulation models being developed for them by the Illinois State Water Survey will be used to estimate watershed-pollutant loads. Thus, CMAP is supporting a collaborative structure for conserving the Fox River, an important source of regional water supply. The planning process and watershed plans are to be completed by December 31, 2011.