



NEWS

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CONTACT: Mary Randle
Phone: 630.859.1331
mrandle@metrowestcog.org

Cities and Counties Unite to Address Water Supply Planning Challenges

Aurora IL – Water - it is vital to life. But is there enough water to sustain communities for the rest of the century? Communities in the NWPA do not rely on Lake Michigan water. They are served by other surface waters, ground water and shallow aquifer systems. These systems face critical shortages without some form of conservation and planning. The Northwest Water Planning Alliance (NWPA) was formed as a voluntary partnership to address the issues of water supply planning and management in northeastern Illinois.

“Regional water supply planning is required because water is a finite resource, the sources of which are shared by multiple communities,” said Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner, NWPA Chairman. “While we are not currently in crisis, we want to seize this opportunity to avoid a crisis by planning cooperatively for the future. Past and current history leave little doubt that we need to begin taking the right steps now, in order to assure adequate water supply, quality of life and a strong regional economy to the generations that follow us. Solutions rationally developed by consensus today will be more effective, more affordable and less contentious than solutions derived in crisis.”

The Alliance brings together five councils of government (COGs), representing approximately 80 municipalities, with five county governments in DeKalb, Kane, Kendall, Lake and McHenry Counties. The COGs include the Barrington Area Council of Governments, the Lake County Municipal League, McHenry County Council of Governments, Metro West Council of Government and the Northwest Municipal Conference. The area encompasses 1.3 million people and includes municipalities ranging from small rural communities to cities as large as Aurora and Elgin. The NWPA serves communities and water suppliers that are served by groundwater and surface-waters excluding Lake Michigan. The NWPA focuses on water planning, water conservation and education and is advisory in nature.

The area councils of government had formed a Joint COGs Water Supply Planning Group several years ago. Later the COGS invited the area county governments to join in a wider collaborative effort. Out of this was born the Northwest Water Planning Alliance.

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The NWPA partnership was also formed partly in response to Water 2050: the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply / Demand Plan published in March 2010 by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP.) The Water Plan was the culmination of three-year cooperative planning effort. One of the major recommendations of the Regional Water Supply Planning Group was for a cooperative planning and management approach that would join municipalities and counties in a water planning group that would advance many of the recommendations and concepts identified in the Water 2050 Plan.

The NWPA is governed by an executive committee, which consists of nine elected municipal leaders and five county board chairmen. A Technical Advisory Committee comprised of municipal and county water planning professionals and consulting agency partners provides technical expertise and input. “The NWPA is an example of what may be accomplished when Counties and municipalities are working together on an issue of such importance,” said NWPA Vice-Chair, Kane County Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay. “We each have something valuable to bring to the table and there is so much to be gained through a cooperative effort,” she added.

The first two projects include a cooperative effort with Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) and water utility operators to measure water levels in deep aquifers and collaboration with CMAP to create educational materials that can be included in newsletters or inserted with water bills.

A list of NWPA municipalities and counties is included below. (See next page)

NWPA Municipalities & Counties

Algonquin
Antioch
Aurora
Barrington
Barrington Hills
Bartlett
Batavia
Big Rock
Bull Valley
Burlington
Campton Hills
Carpentersville
Cary
Crystal Lake
Deer Park
DeKalb
DeKalb County (unincorporated)
East Dundee
Elburn
Fox Lake
Fox River Grove
Geneva
Gilberts
Grayslake
Green Oaks
Greenwood
Hainesville
Hampshire
Harvard
Hawthorne Woods
Hebron
Huntley
Inverness
Island Lake
Johnsburg
Kane County (unincorporated)
Kaneville
Kendall County (unincorporated)
Kildeer
Lake Barrington
Lake County (unincorporated)
Lake in the Hills

Lakemoor
Lake Villa
Lakewood
Lake Zurich
Lily Lake
Lindenhurst
Maple Park
Marengo
McCullom Lake
McHenry
McHenry County (unincorporated)
Millbrook
Montgomery
Newark
North Aurora
North Barrington
Oswego
Pingree Grove
Prairie Grove
Prospect Heights
Richmond
Ringwood
Sleepy Hollow
South Barrington
South Elgin
Spring Grove
St. Charles
Sugar Grove
Tower Lakes
Trout Valley
Union
Virgil
Wadsworth
Wauconda
Wayne
West Dundee
Woodstock
Yorkville