

Water-Demand Study Meeting for McLean, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties

The following is a synopsis of the August 21, 2007 water supply planning meeting held in Tremont, Illinois targeting McLean, Tazewell, and Woodford counties.

Meeting Location: Tremont, Illinois

Meeting Date: August 21, 2007

Targeted Areas: McLean, Tazewell, and Woodford counties

Main Concerns:

1. Water availability
2. Water quality
3. Future regulations
4. Regional planning

Meeting Attendees

Group Represented	Number of Attendees
Public	42
East Central Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Committee	3
Mahomet Aquifer Consortium Board	1
Illinois State Water Survey	1
Wittman Hydro Planning Associates (Water-Demand Study Team)	2
Total	49

Meeting Summary

Susan Licher of Wittman Hydro Planning Associates, Inc. (WHPA) gave a presentation on the scope and time line for the water supply planning project. This project involves a fifteen county region in East Central Illinois and was initiated in response to Governor Blagojevich's Executive Order 2006-1. Susan Licher's presentation focused on the background of the water supply planning initiative, the methods associated with assessing water-demand, and the historical data being used in the water-demand study.

After the presentation, the attendees were asked to state with whom they were affiliated and what specific concerns or comments they had regarding the study. The following paragraphs are a general synopsis of the stakeholders concerns.

Traci Barkley from the Prairie Rivers Network was concerned about surface-water base flows, public water supply protection, and habitat protection. Traci Barkley stated that people must realize that surface water and groundwater systems are interconnected and are not completely separate systems. She also expressed concerns regarding the inclusion of climate change through

sensitivity analysis rather than in the three future scenarios, because climate does have an impact on the explanatory variables that will be used in the water demand models.

Susan Licher responded by saying that we are assessing climatic relationships between historical climate data and water. In order to understand the future scenarios in the study, sensitivity analysis was chosen by the group because of the uncertainty in the climatic models. The sensitivity analysis will allow us to assess the impacts of climate separately from the other variables that will be included in the three future scenarios.

Dave Dingedine, a water well contractor with M.E. Bent Company and the director of the Illinois Association of Groundwater Professionals, stated that he wanted to make sure that this group had the proper focus and that water restrictions were not implemented where water was plentiful. He wants to be a direct partner in water supply planning and the studies that are currently being conducted.

James Adams, McLean Mayor, and Dick McMann, a McLean Trustee, stated their concerns about growth in northern McLean County and its potential to significantly deplete the water supply in the Village of McLean.

Larry Littell with Spin Lake Public Water stated his concern about well-drilling by Bloomington and the potential of that well to significantly deplete the water supply.

Jennifer Sicks, McLean County Regional Planning Commission, stated that McLean County is currently working on a local demand study and she is interested in seeing how the regional water demand study data and information match up and work with their local study. In response to the two previous comments she said that she wants to see everyone in the county and region discussing how a new well field might impact them. She wants to see people involved in these processes and is interested in regional water supply planning in general.

At that point, Tom Korn with the Allin Township Water Authority introduced himself and stated that he came to the meeting to learn about and be involved in the whole process of water supply planning.

Glen Thompson of Tremont, who is originally from eastern Colorado, wants to see a fair and equitable system for water distribution here in Illinois. Being from the West he understands the importance of water supply planning and he is concerned about the long-term availability of water in Illinois without water supply planning.

Susan Licher stated that one reason Illinois began looking at water supply planning is that there are so many states that currently have water supply planning and Illinois is at a disadvantage without water supply planning. In areas where water shortages are common, water supply planning is critical. While Illinois is not in that situation currently, water supply planning can begin the process of looking at those areas where quantity may become an issue in the future.

Tom Edwards with the Sierra Club and River Rescue stated that he wanted conservation to be in the discussion. He was also concerned that water quality was not being directly included in these

studies because there are many different sources of groundwater contamination.

As a response, Ed Glatfelter of the Illinois State Water Survey said that the supply study will deal with water quality only on a “macro level.” Highly saline water in parts of the aquifer are not considered available water sources, for instance.

Traci Barkley followed by saying that water quantity will affect the water quality because water is used to dilute wastewater. In order to reduce the concentration of contaminants in surface waters there must be a sufficient supply of clean water to be used in the dilution process. She is concerned about both quality and quantity and does not want to see valuable groundwater being wasted for dilution.

Joyce Blumenshine of the Sierra Club followed that by saying that water quality is of concern now because groundwater and surface water are being polluted.

Although this is a concern, Ed Glatfelter stated that this is just the first iteration of a much longer process. He said that this study is largely modeled on work done in Texas. Every five (5) years Texas must start the whole water demand/supply process over. The first iteration of the study will not take a detailed look at water quality but the State hopes to incorporate it in the future.

One gentleman asked how the results of the study would be used and what role the planning committee plays in the outcome.

Ed Glatfelter answered by saying that once the study is completed, the Water Supply Planning Committee's role will be strictly advisory. The recommendations made by the committee must fall under existing laws and property rights. He hopes that the recommendations will be picked up by those organizations that have control of water use in their jurisdictions and that some or all of the recommendations will be implemented locally.

One gentleman requested a synopsis of the statements made today. Bob Duvall, Patrick Engineering, also requested copies of today's sign-in sheets.

Mel Pleines of the Mackinaw Valley Water Authority and Chairman of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium stated that the goal of the study was to estimate the amount of water-demand the aquifer can support, what areas are available for growth, and those areas where conflict may occur in the future.

Wayne Deppert, a livestock and crop farmer and a representative of the Imperial Valley Water Authority, introduced himself and stated that his concern is water availability for his crops, livestock, and domestic use.

Traci Barkley asked how people can stay involved in the whole process.

Brent O'Neill, chairman of the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee, replied that on September 20, 2007 there will be a committee meeting at the Park Inn in Urbana. Registration will start around 9:30 a.m. and the meeting will run from approximately 10:00 a.m. until 2:00

p.m.. Lunch will be provided.

One gentleman asked about nitrates and other contaminants that are leaching into groundwater due to agricultural practices.

Morris Bell of the RWSPC believes there are no contaminants in the wells due to agriculture fertilization. He explained that farmers apply what is needed and what is applied is taken up by crops and not leached into the groundwater. He feels that people perceive the contamination to be much worse than it actually is.

In response, Tom Korn stated that, although farmers may apply only what is needed, there are spills sometimes. He mentioned an incident in which a spill was cleaned up by the EPA 1.5 years after the spill occurred.

Susan Licher asked if there were more questions or concerns. She then invited all attendees to pick up information and questionnaire packets and the meeting was concluded.