

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Joe Chekouras, Communications Specialist

(847) 377-2155

jchekouras@co.lake.il.us

Lake County officials discuss future water supply with regional group

Lake County is working with regional partners to address future water supply to a rapidly growing population. As the suburbs of Chicago continue to grow with new businesses and housing developments, the depletion of groundwater is a growing concern. Lake County Board Members are committed to developing strategies to address this problem and in bringing the issue to the forefront throughout the region.

“It's extremely important that our region establishes an outline for planning and cooperation now, before water supplies reach a potential crisis stage,” said Board Member Bonnie Thomson Carter. “Continuing growth throughout the area means that regional cooperation is critical to making these decisions.”

In order to begin addressing the issue with a regional approach, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has organized a Regional Water Supply Planning Group (RWSPG) at the direction of the State of Illinois. The group will assist the State in making recommendations on water resource policies and action plans for northeastern Illinois.

Lake County Board Member Bonnie Thomson Carter and staff from the County's Department of Planning, Building and Development attended the first meeting of the RWSPG along with delegates from across northeastern Illinois.

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There are 35 members of the planning group representing counties, municipalities and stakeholder groups from Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties.

This three-year regional effort will be funded by Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This is one of two initial priority areas selected by the State of Illinois in response to Governor Blagojevich's executive order calling for a statewide study of water-supply issues.

Board Member Carter was appointed to the group representing all of Lake County.

“Bonnie has been a longtime proponent for tackling the water supply issue as areas of western Lake County continue to grow,” said Lake County Board Chairman Suzi Schmidt.

“By the year 2020 we will be in a crisis situation as far as the demand for water is concerned,” Carter said. “Taking a regional approach in addressing the issue will make certain we are on the same page regionally and the public has a clear idea about what we are doing to address this critical issue and what they may need to do to help themselves.”

The Regional Water Supply Planning Group will focus on the area's deep bedrock aquifer and the Fox River Basin's shallow bedrock aquifer, which supply water to homes and businesses. In addition, the planning group will consider the allocation of Lake Michigan water on current and potential users.

CMAP and the RWSPG will submit the water-supply plan to the State of Illinois for approval. Over the next three years, the State is expected to define a comprehensive

program for state and regional water-supply planning, which includes development of standards for regional action plans and guidance for regional planning processes.

For more information, visit the Lake County website at

http://www.co.lake.il.us/planning/support/projects/projects_Water_Supply.asp