

Summary of the Water Resources Action Plan (WRAP) Update (1-2-19)

Water is necessary for all life and for all economic opportunity. McHenry County is very fortunate to have numerous streams, rivers, lakes and wetland that provide rich habitat, recreational opportunities and natural beauty. The county is also fortunate to contain multiple types of groundwater aquifers since it depends entirely on groundwater to supply all of the potable water in the county. The scale and quality of these water resources are unique and contribute to an attractive quality of life for residents, visitors and businesses. However, our water resources are vulnerable and need to be protected, or restored, so they may continue providing the benefits we depend on.

The first comprehensive study of the county's water was the 2007 Groundwater Resources Management Plan (GRMP). The GRMP evaluated the supply and demand for water into the future and identified potential risks to water resources including susceptibility to contamination, over-use, and drought. A Water Resource Task Force was convened in 2007 to focus on solutions to the water quality and quantity concerns identified in the GRMP. The Task Force consisted of staff from County government along with volunteers from municipalities, townships, other government agencies, businesses and other organizations. In 2009, the Water Resources Action Plan (WRAP) was completed by the Task Force and adopted by the County Board.

The WRAP is designed to provide Best Management Practices (BMP's) that empower municipalities and residents to protect McHenry County's water resources for current and future generations. Since the WRAP is now ten years old and approaches to water resource protection have evolved, the plan needs to be updated using the most current data and strategies. As part of the update, the WRAP will be prepared in a format that is more accessible to stakeholders such as municipalities, residents and businesses.

Similar to the original WRAP, a Task Force of County Staff and stakeholders will be organized. The McHenry County Department of Planning and Development will be the primary entity leading the WRAP update with assistance from the Department of Health. The Task Force will include volunteers from the County Board, municipalities, townships, other government agencies, businesses, non-profits, other organizations and residents.

The Task Force will hold monthly meetings to educate members about water related topics, provide input on relevant policies or practices, and review drafts of revised sections of the updated WRAP. The Task Force will be established in February 2019 and meetings will be held throughout 2019. Drafts of the revised WRAP will be prepared with the intent of going before the County Board for review and adoption beginning in the Spring of 2020.

The goal for the WRAP is to provide information needed for stakeholders to protect and restore water resources in McHenry County. The Plan is designed to allow stakeholders to adopt the portions of Plan most relevant to their particular needs. Implementation of the Plan will include public outreach, workshops, presentations, press and social media. The success of the Plan will be realized by the increased awareness of water resources in the community and stakeholders incorporation of the Plan's BMPs into daily operations and routines.

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