

# **MAHOMET AQUIFER CONSORTIUM**

## **STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLANS**

**September 1, 2010**

This is a Strategic Plan (A) and Action Plan (B) for the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium, prepared by the Board of Directors with input from the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee, Technical Advisers and other Members of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium. The plans were prepared following a Strategic Analysis (C).

The Strategic Plan consists of (i) a Mission, (ii) a Vision and (iii) Goals. The Mission states the nature of the Consortium's business. The Vision defines the desired future state of regional water supply planning and management that the Consortium seeks to achieve and is a source of inspiration. Broad strategic Goals are statements of what the Consortium wishes to achieve over the period of the strategic plan.

The Action Plan identifies key items in the Strategic Plan to be implemented. While recognizing that a long-term, adaptive process of study, analysis, planning and education must be implemented in order to achieve the Consortium's vision and goals, the Action Plan focuses on priority action items to be implemented in the short and medium term.

The Consortium recognizes the need to periodically review and update the Strategic and Action Plans.

### **A. STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **i. MISSION**

Water is a valuable, precious, but limited resource vital to all life, society and the economy.

Many diverse interests and values come into play and interact when studying, planning and managing water supplies.

The Mahomet Aquifer Consortium recognizes the importance and value of providing adequate, reliable and sustainable supplies of clean water for all users (people and ecosystems) in East-Central Illinois, both today and in the future, and a wide diversity of interests of stakeholders. East-Central Illinois embraces 15 counties: Cass, Champaign, DeWitt, Ford, Iroquois, Logan, Macon, Mason, McLean, Menard, Piatt, Sangamon, Tazewell, Vermilion and Woodford.

***The mission of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium is to:***

- i) coordinate, encourage and facilitate activities that lead to improved understanding of groundwater and surface water supplies in East-Central Illinois;***
- ii) assist in education about water supplies and conservation;***
- iii) lead the planning and evaluation of water supply management options on a regional basis; and***
- iv) as needed, recommend plans and actions based upon sound scientific and engineering principles.***

In fulfilling its mission, the Consortium will seek to work towards a consensus among diverse stakeholders on vital issues.

**ii. VISION**

***Over the next ten years, due to the activities of the Consortium and stakeholders, residents across East-Central Illinois will inherit a legacy of responsible water supply planning and management that will provide a basis for providing sustainable water supplies for future generations.***

**iii. GOALS**

- 1. Increase stakeholder participation in regional water supply planning and management.**

- 2. Establish stable and adequate funding for the activities of the Consortium.**
- 3. Continue a regional water supply planning process.**
- 4. Establish an appropriate internal structure for the Consortium.**
- 5. Improve interaction between the Consortium and other planning groups.**
- 6. Improve understanding of water supplies, water use and sustainability in the region.**
- 7. Improve the dissemination of information about water supplies and water conservation in order to educate the public.**

## **B. ACTION PLAN**

- 1. Increase stakeholder participation in regional water supply planning and management.**
  - i) Build relationships with Mayors/Township officials, Illinois Rural Water Association, Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association, the Rural Community Assistance Program, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Municipal League, Central Illinois Municipal Officials Association, Regional Operator Groups, Engineering Associations, Department of Professional Regulation, American Public Works Association and others, and perhaps provide continuing education credits.
  - ii) Convene a central conference for science education.
- 2. Establish stable and adequate funding for the activities of the Consortium.**

- i). Explore all funding resources (local, federal, state, private sector and foundations)
- ii). Continue to work with other regional water supply committees to seek state funds through legislators.

**3. Continue a regional water supply planning process.**

- i). Produce a plan to revise the 2009 regional water supply plan by 2014.

**4. Establish an appropriate internal structure for the Consortium.**

- i). Add two Members to the Consortium's Board of Directors to broaden the geographic representation and expertise of Board Members.  
[completed]
- ii). Re-establish the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee as a committee to the Consortium to facilitate stakeholder participation in regional water supply planning and management.
- iii). Produce a charge for the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee with consideration of advice from the Chair of the Committee.
- iv). Identify and seek to obtain the human resources needed to implement the Action Plan.
- v). Review and, if necessary, revise the Consortium's Bylaws to ensure consistency with the revised mission and activities.

**5. Improve interaction between the Consortium and other planning groups.**

- i). Track regional water supply planning and management activities in Northeast Illinois and the Kaskaskia River Basin and at the state and national levels.

ii). Encourage the Director of the Office of Water Resources in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to establish a periodic mechanism of communication for state and regional water supply planning in Illinois.

**6. Improve understanding of water supplies, water use and sustainability in the region.**

i). Add life-science expertise to the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee and the Consortium's Technical Advisers.

ii). Convene a meeting with the Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to review the Consortium's Strategic Plan and appropriate recommendations of the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee and to identify appropriate action items.

iii). Encourage the Illinois State Water Survey and Illinois Geological Survey to continue research, monitoring and data collection and analysis related to water supplies in the region.

**7. Improve the dissemination of information about water supplies and water conservation in order to educate the public.**

i). Develop Public Service Announcements on water supply topics for local public television channels and networks.

ii). Prepare and disseminate to schools media presentations on water supplies.

**C. STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

The following information was considered in developing the Strategic and Action Plans:

- i). The current mission, goals, structure, bylaws and activities of the Consortium.
- ii). The June 2009 report of the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee.
- iii). Growing public recognition of the value of water, both quantity and quality, and the need for good stewardship.
- iv). No public perception of major water-supply problems at this time: in recent water-rich years water has been cheap and available.
- v). A need to incorporate public sentiment into the planning process, especially when conflicting interests arise.
- vi). Availability of new water technologies, both good and bad, and evolving economics that allow capitalization.
- vii). Possible increasing demand for East-Central Illinois water distant from the sources.
- viii). A lack of clear and concise State Law for water use.
- ix). A need to develop alliances as a basis for stewardship.

The following **strengths** of the Consortium were recognized:

- 12 years of water planning.
- Stake-holder representation.
- Ready access to water producers and distributors.
- Strong technical advisors.

- Involvement with vital, broadly distributed necessary resources.
- A grassroots culture.
- Cooperation between competitors.

The following **weaknesses** of the Consortium were discussed:

- Lack of broad stake-holder representation.
- Lack of momentum.
- Lack of funding.
- Current lack of ability to address many issues including water quality.

The following **opportunities** for the Consortium were described:

- More can be done for education and outreach.
- Funding can be increased.
- The future can be shaped.
- Research and development can be conducted in a non-crisis mode.
- The water community can be expanded to include surface water.

The following **threats** to the Consortium and water supplies were identified:

- There are powerful organizations outside the region that can influence the management of water supplies in East-Central Illinois.
- There is a risk of polluting the aquifers.