

# **MAHOMET AQUIFER CONSORTIUM**

<http://www.mahometaquiferconsortium.org>

## Mission statement:

*To further study the Mahomet aquifer system, the river basins and surface waters located in the 15 county regional water supply planning area and to develop and recommend options for the planning and management of these valuable public resources.*

## Contribution to Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC)

The MAC has reestablished the “Regional Water Supply Planning Committee” to continue education and aquifer studies with the goal of having a report in 2014. With the committee starting its charge there are education and aquifer study expenses that will be incurred, thus the MAC is asking for your consideration of a contribution for these responsibilities by the RWSPC and MAC. Currently the MAC is solely dependant on contributions as state monies have not been appropriated for this purpose. Please mail any contributions to: Mahomet Aquifer Consortium Devonshire Drive, Champaign, IL 61820 Thank You for your support.

## Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC)

Members of the MAC Executive Board met on May 17, June 20, July 25, and August 22 in Champaign to discuss future directions for regional water supply planning, membership of the East-Central Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Committee and the proposed Clinton landfill for harmful PCB wastes. The next Board meeting will be Monday, September 12, at 1:30 PM at Illinois American Water, 201 Devonshire Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. MAC Members met on June 21 at the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) in Champaign and heard a presentation by George Roadcap with the ISWS on the proposed PCB disposal site in Clinton. Members engaged in fruitful discussion. We look forward to seeing you at the next Member meeting at 10 AM at the ISWS on Tuesday, September 20, when there will be further interesting discussion on the proposed Clinton landfill. William Dey and Andy Stumpf will speak on Geologic Mapping . The ISWS is located at 2204 Griffith Drive, Champaign, IL 61820.

## Proposed PCB Disposal Site in Clinton

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is proposing to approve PCB waste disposal in a new, specially-designed landfill in Clinton, right over the Mahomet Aquifer. PCBs have been used as dielectric and coolant fluids, for example in transformers, capacitors, and electric motors. Due to their toxicity and classification as a persistent organic pollutant, PCB production was banned by the United States Congress in 1979 and by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in 2001. On behalf of the MAC, George Roadcap, an experienced groundwater engineer with the ISWS and Technical Advisor to the MAC, submitted comments on the proposal to build the new landfill. He pointed out some critical inconsistencies in the water table elevation data used by USEPA to state that the PCB landfill will meet necessary regulations. He concluded that if the correct data are used, the permit would not be acceptable according to the regulations as stated in the permit. You can read George’s comments at [http://www.mahometaquiferconsortium.org/ClintonLF\\_comments\\_ISWS2USEPA.pdf](http://www.mahometaquiferconsortium.org/ClintonLF_comments_ISWS2USEPA.pdf). Information on the Clinton Landfill Application is available via the internet at <http://1.usa.gov/NGclinton>. PRG Associates, Inc, submitted detailed comments on July 22 and these can be viewed at [http://www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/sites/ClintonLandfill/PDFClintonLFChemicalWaste\\_USEPAApplication/cl\\_252.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/sites/ClintonLandfill/PDFClintonLFChemicalWaste_USEPAApplication/cl_252.pdf).

On July 6 the City of Champaign hosted a meeting of organizations from eastern counties to discuss a coordinated response to the disposal of harmful wastes at the Clinton landfill to discuss long-term preservation of the Mahomet Aquifer as a major source of clean water for the region. The discussion recognized the need for technical, legal, political and organizational action. The City of Champaign volunteered to coordinate communication while short-term efforts are pursued.

## State Water Plan Task Force

Arlan Juhl, the newly-appointed Director of the Office of Water Resources in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, chaired a meeting of the State Water Plan Task Force on June 15 in Springfield. There was discussion about the future of regional water supply planning in Illinois, recognizing that state authority for such planning specified in Executive Order 2006-01 has expired. The chair offered to discuss with administrative officials the possible development of a “foundation document” to guide continuing programs in regional water supply planning and to report back to the Task Force.

## **East-Central Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Committee (RWSPC)**

The RWSPC met on May 20 and June 28 to discuss and set an agenda for implementing the charge given to the Committee by the MAC. The heart of the charge is to i) continue education and outreach activities to inform the public about the need for water supply planning and ii) update the 2009 RWSPC regional plan by 2014, focusing on drought preparedness. The 2009 plan can be viewed via the internet at [http://www.rwspc.org/documents/ECI-WaterPlan\\_062909.pdf](http://www.rwspc.org/documents/ECI-WaterPlan_062909.pdf). At the June 28 meeting Arlan Juhl, Director of the Office of Water Resources, reiterated his June 15 promise to the State Water Plan Task Force to discuss with administrative officials the possible development of a "foundation document" to guide continuing programs in regional water supply planning and to report back. The RWSPC met on August 23 at the IAA Building, Earl Smith Hall, 1700 Towanda Ave, Bloomington, from 9:00am to 2:30pm. A report of this meeting will follow in the September Mahomet Aquifer Consortium Newsletter

## **Groundwater Models**

MAC is seeking physical groundwater models, also known as "ant farms" that are used to teach groundwater concepts. If you have one that you no longer want, or have one that you are willing to share with others in your community, please e-mail Ed Mehnert at the Illinois State Geological Survey. MAC will collect and then loan out any the "groundwater models" to schools and interest groups. In addition, MAC can serve as a clearinghouse for any "loaner" models. Ed's e-mail address is [mehnert@isgs.illinois.edu](mailto:mehnert@isgs.illinois.edu).

## **Drought**

The scourge of water supply planners – extreme and exceptional drought – is hitting southern parts of the country hard. From Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas across to Florida and Georgia shortages of rainfall and high temperatures are combining to severely affect pasture, rangeland, crops and lake levels. In parts of Texas it is the worst drought on record. Water use restrictions are in place in many communities as they watch reservoirs levels fall. It is precisely the recurrence of the severe droughts that we saw in Illinois in the 1930s and 1950s that we must plan for in central Illinois. They will recur; it is only a question of when. Drought information is available at [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/drought\\_assessment.shtml](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/drought_assessment.shtml).

## **The Prairie Research Institute**

Until 2008 the Illinois Scientific Surveys were divisions of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. In July 2008 the Prairie Research Institute, (originally The Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability), was created to house the four state scientific surveys — Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS), the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS), the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS), and the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) — as a group under the auspices of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Then in 2010, the Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program (ITARP) became the fifth division under the new name of the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, further expanding the Institute's research and service capabilities. The Institute's mission and vision statement reflect the importance of sustaining our state's natural resources. The MAC is well served by technical advisors from the Scientific Surveys, who bring a wealth of scientific and engineering knowledge and experience to regional water supply planning. You can access the Institute's website at <http://www.prairie.illinois.edu/about-inrs.shtml>.

## **ISWS Website for Water Supply Operators**

Operators of water systems that serve small communities face many challenges: overcoming compliance issues with few resources and a lack of money to train staff. That's where the Illinois State Water Survey's website can help. New updates and use of social media on the site help operators find the best information they need quickly and efficiently, according to Steve Wilson, manager of the website and a Groundwater Hydrologist at the ISWS. The website, which was launched in 2009, is a clearinghouse for **FREE** online resources. To date, ISWS staff have found useful information from more than 750 organizations and agencies, and the site includes links to more than 10,000 free documents. Among the features is a continuing education calendar, since operators must have training to maintain their licenses. A new page relays information on reporting to customers, another mandate, with best practices on how to communicate effectively. On the site's YouTube page, four videos show operators how to navigate the site. Providing help for using the site is important, said Wilson, because many operators are not web savvy. The site also has a Facebook page and a Twitter account. In a recent month, 11 percent of referrals to the site came from Twitter. If operators have difficulty downloading any information from the site, they can contact the staff at ISWS and receive a paper copy for **FREE**. For more information, contact staff at (866) 522-2681; e-mail, [info@smallwatersupply.org](mailto:info@smallwatersupply.org).