



NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois EPA announces \$597,000 Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program funding for DuPage River Watersheds

Federally funded project will enable local work to continue

SPRINGFIELD --- The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) announced today that it has approved a \$597,000 Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program grant, which will enable a group of concerned communities to continue efforts to extend current study efforts in the DuPage River and Salt Creek Watersheds.

The DuPage River/Salt Creek Workgroup will administer the activities, with the local partners – municipalities, sanitary districts, and county government – providing the remaining \$398,000 needed to complete this phase of the project. The project, which will begin January 1, 2006 and run through August 31, 2008, will provide funds for a local project coordinator, expand the local dissolved oxygen monitoring system, and complete a biological habitat assessment and dissolved oxygen improvement feasibility study.

The grant is being provided through the IEPA as part of Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The purpose of IEPA's Section 319 Program is to work with local government and other organizations to protect water quality in Illinois through the control of non-point source pollution. The program provides funds to implement projects that utilize cost-effective best management practices to protect Illinois' water resources.

“There has been wonderful involvement by municipal partners throughout the watershed,” said IEPA Director Doug Scott. “The project will assist the local communities that are involved in water quality protection to better select the best management practices to improve water quality on the East and West Branches of the DuPage River and Salt Creek. In the long run, this project should help communities implement the most cost effective water quality improvement projects possible.”

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Salt Creek and the East and West Branches of the DuPage River have been listed on the Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters by the State of Illinois. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for each of these streams have been prepared by the IEPA and approved by the USEPA. Compliance with the recommendations contained in these TMDL reports would require significant financial commitments on the part of all of the communities in the watersheds. Watershed stakeholders identified early on that considerable economic and environmental benefits could be realized if a coordinated effort was made.

To that end, a group of local communities, publicly owned treatment works, and environmental citizen organizations have come together to form the DuPage River/Salt Creek Workgroup. Their mission is to bring together a diverse coalition of stakeholders to work together to preserve and enhance water quality in the East Branch DuPage River, West Branch DuPage River, Salt Creek and their tributaries. The Workgroup plans to do this by collecting reliable and viable water quality data, investigating the options available to meet water quality standards and implementing a coordinated effort to install best management practices in the watershed.

“Such locally-based efforts make communities better places to live and work, improve the local economy and typify the basic premise of our Opportunity Returns initiative,” said Governor Blagojevich. *Opportunity Returns* is Governor Blagojevich’s economic development plan designed to spur economic growth and create jobs in the region. The regional economic development plan is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois. *Opportunity Returns* contains tangible actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to business. Funding of natural resources improvements, such as those awarded through the 319 Program, make Illinois a better place to live and work.