

# Wisconsin water tech leaders in China for 'sponge cities' conferences

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 29, 2017

Wisconsin water tech leaders are in China this week for two conferences focusing on 'sponge cities,' an effort started in 2015 to capture and use runoff water in the country's large, highly developed urban areas.

According to Katy Sinnott, vice president of International Business Development at WEDC, China plans to capture 75 percent of all runoff by 2025, and 80 percent by 2030.

"This is a really aggressive program," she said yesterday on a conference call with reporters. "Wisconsin is well-positioned to help China successfully address these water challenges."

The country has set aside about \$12.5 billion in U.S. dollars to "move this sponge city effort along" in 30 cities, according to Dean Amhaus, president and CEO of the Water Council, a water tech hub located in Milwaukee.

"What happens in China is you have these torrential rainstorms — vast amounts of water, huge amounts of damage... then it runs off, and then they have a drought," Amhaus said. "Through management practices, it's possible to capture and use that water. It sounds simple and easy, but it's much more complicated than that."

This wasteful cycle occurs because of China's "uncontrolled development" in the past few decades, according to Amhaus.

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