

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354
Linda MacGregor, P. E., Branch Chief 404/675-6232
FAX: 404/675-6247

May 12, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Bill Martello, JJG
Jeff Larson, GA EPD

SUBJECT: Council Meeting Summary
Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Planning Council Meeting

CC: David Ashley, JJG
Tai-Yi Su, JJG
Heather Dyke, CH2M HILL
Inga Kennedy, PEQ

Georgia Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan Regional Water Planning

Council Meeting 1 Summary

Meeting Date: May 7, 2009
Location: Savannah Rapids Pavilion
Attendees: See List

1) Registration

Registration period from 9:00 to 9:30

Meeting called to order at 9:32 by Bill Martello, Planning Consultant.

2) Welcome and Introductions/Approve Agenda

Martello introduced Ron Cross and Pat Goodwin for the official meeting welcome.

Cross recognized local officials present from the area.

Martello asked members to introduce themselves and their roles. Jeff Larson introduced himself as the assigned EPD representative/liaison to the council.

3) Recap Water Planning Councils Kick-off Meeting

Martello asked for show of hands for attendance at kickoff meeting. Martello then briefly provided an overview of the kickoff meeting and results of the meeting evaluations.

Martello then discussed agenda for today's meeting and the meeting one framework, which includes MOA, operating procedures, and election of Chair/co-Chair.

Martello asked for questions or changes to the agenda.

Facilitator Inga Kennedy addressed any housekeeping issues, e.g. nominations throughout the day for Chair/Vice-Chair; for guests who signed in, a public comment sheet will be passed around for sign up later this afternoon; discussion of how members wish to receive information (via mail, email, etc.); scheduling for upcoming meeting dates and potential locations.

4) Explanation of the Water Planning Process

Martello began discussion of the water planning process, including an overview of the regional water planning stakeholders (regional water planning councils, regional planning contractors, local government advisory body, public, other water planning councils, EPD), the stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

One council member mentioned that he has attended another regional council meeting and that they are eager to work together.

Martello presented the timeline, schedule, and meeting agenda, quarterly meetings with defined topics and goals over the next 2 years. No questions from council members about the schedule.

Martello then began discussion of the water planning process. Water resource assessments, forecasts and public participation all lead into the regional plan development (following a template generated by the EPD so all plans follow the same format), which then moves through the approval process (EPD and consensus among the regional planning council). The results will assess the environmental and economic progress and agency decision-making. The focus today will be on the forecasts (population and employment statistics, agricultural needs, and land cover).

Question: Are the same guidelines in place now to work in conjunction with statutes that are currently in place? Are we changing existing laws?

Response: The intent is to work within current statutes and rules. However, if the Council feels statutes or rules should be amended, that can be vetted.

Question: Are we planning to take existing water levels and release schedules into account?

Response: There are a lot of players and factors involved. This process will address and tackle some of the complicated issues (inter-council deliberations, US Army Corps releases).

Question: Could we get clarification in writing in case the council determines some issues that might have an impact on state laws?

Response: We will determine what we think is needed as we go through the planning process.

Question: Won't there be a conflict between what the council develops and current state laws?

Response: Not anticipated but EPD will address issues/conflicts if they occur.

Question: Statute of concern is the MNGWPD interbasin transfers?

Response: Restrictions on interbasin transfers are recognized.

Question: Can each council get a drought contingency plan with the Corps and address interbasin transfers to South Carolina? Can we get this information?

Response: The drought contingency plan is available on the Corps website. The South Carolina basin will be a part of this planning process.

The consultant team will provide the council members with copies of the Corps Drought Contingency Plan and permitted South Carolina withdrawals .

Martello opened the floor to other questions.

Question: We need to understand the amount allowed for interbasin transfers and the flexibility allowed by the council in making recommendations for statute changes.

5) MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings

Larson moved on to discuss the MOA – Council responsibilities (first action item today is to adopt operating procedure and rules for the meetings); EPD responsibilities, DCA responsibilities.

Larson discussed Operating Procedures and Rules for Meetings. The council will identify any desired changes to the operating procedures and meeting rules in today's meeting. At the next meeting, EPD will provide feedback on the proposed changes; the documents will then be finalized and the members will be asked to sign the MOA. Larson asked for questions from the floor. There were no questions or comments.

Kennedy led exercises on the planning process: Exercise 1, Operating Procedures/Rules for Meetings Broad Issues Areas, pertained to the review of the MOA. Each table was assigned a group number and the part of the MOA they would be responsible for discussing. Each table was asked to designate a spokesperson to lead discussion. The groups were given 40 minutes to complete the first exercise.

Kennedy reconvened the groups for discussion on Exercise 1.

Work Group 1 (Operating Procedures for Council Leadership): 2/3 vote of meeting members present required for leadership approval. The procedures call for a 6-month term for Chair and Vice-Chair. Recommendation is to make term 1 year to capture more meetings and allow for re-election. Discussion:

If you leave term at 6-month and allow for re-election, then there is no issue. **Recommendation:** Group recommends annual election of officers.

Work Group 2 (Operating Procedures for Meetings and Governance, part 1): Would like for the technical team to provide a scribe for the meetings. The Chair is responsible for calling the meetings. Would follow 24-hour notice for public attendance for called meetings. Discussion: Will 24-hour notice work to encourage and obtain public involvement? All meetings will be open to the public abiding by the Open Records Act. Questions regarding how can a 24-hour notice coincide with newspaper publication schedules? Kennedy and other members answered that there are other ways to notify the public and the council can still notify the newspapers of a meeting. **Recommendations:** Add Chair as the person who can call meetings.

Kennedy briefly deviated from group discussion to ask guests who is from public and how they were notified of meeting. One person mentioned a council member notified him and that a meeting notice was run in the Augusta newspaper.

Work Group 3 (Operating Procedures for Meetings and Governance, part 2): Agreed with actions regarding quorum, consent, resignation of Chair, subcommittees. Discussion: This document states that the entire council to appoint subcommittees. **Recommendation:** The Chair has the authority to appoint subcommittees.

Work Group 4 (Rules for Meetings): Issues: Subsection E, how to address dealing with the media. Possibly develop bullet points capturing highlights of each meeting to disseminate to the public and to keep everyone on the same page. **Recommendation:** provide council members with meeting summary of what was discussed, decisions made, and topics to be discussed at next meeting. Also, include web address to refer back to website for information. Any minutes distributed prior to board approval should be indicated they are draft minutes of the meeting. One person should be the spokesperson for the group...possibly EPD rep/liaison. EPD staff will be the media representative for the planning council. The council members should distinguish between individual and council thoughts when talking with the media.

Also, length of meetings - adjourn meetings if business is finished before end time indicated on agenda to respect the time of everyone present.

Work Group 5 (Rules of Conduct): Possibly address Rule 7, public involvement, doesn't address how public comment will be addressed and how they will be documented as part of council discussion. **Discussion:** Possibly include public comments summarized at end of council meeting summary. The public should sign up prior to beginning of meeting and should be allotted 3-minute comment period at the end of each meeting. Alternatively, the public may not have any comment until after they have heard the council discussion. If someone comes prepared with comment, they could possibly provide written comment. The public comment period is simply to obtain input and will not be a Q & A session. The comments will be summarized and addressed at a later time. Adopt 3 minute per person time limit on comment.

Kennedy led council members in Exercise 2, Achieving Results through Consensus Decision Making. The working groups were instructed to Response the 3 questions in the exercise and the group spokesperson report back to entire body. The groups were given 10 minutes to complete the exercise.

Kennedy reconvened the group to discuss exercise 2:

Work Group 1: A minority opinion should be captured in the meeting minutes. Consensus is when something passes and no one is completely happy.

Work Group 2: Completely agree with Work Group 1.

Work Group 3: Consensus is a simple majority and that every vote should be recorded. Consensus will likely be greater than a simple majority or 2/3 vote. Discussion...if 50% is all that the group can get, maybe the issue should not be decided upon. Policy decisions should be based on 2/3 quorum.

Work Group 4: Should guidance and time limit be given to the Chair on how long a discussion should go to arrive at consensus? Possibly leave it to the discretion of the Chair, who may direct a sub-committee to further discuss unresolved issues.

Work Group 5: Believes that consensus is a 5.5 instead of a 7 on the scale.

The council was adjourned for 30 minutes for lunch. (@ 12:16)

The council was reconvened at 1:15.

6) Present Website Capabilities

Martello discussed the EPD website capabilities on the Georgia State Water Plan with recent news, regions in the state, quick links, and latest documents. EPD will also setup individual regional water council sites. The websites are in working progress. The website should be launched within the next couple of weeks. EPD has a link on its homepage with the Georgia Statewide Water Planning activities and information.

Question: Is previous work that Bob Kerr did over a decade ago available to post on the website?

The consultant team will research the prior work to see what information is available and other basin plans currently available on EPD website for council review.

7) Regional Geography, Facilities, and Resources Overview

Martello led discussion on regional geography, facilities, and resources overview. This discussion included information on total population by region (2007 estimates), total population within the region by county (2007). Five sets of regional issues were discussed – 16 high priority streams in the planning region, protected species, significant recreational use (boating and fishing); potential threats to water in the region include urbanization, fragmentation and flow alteration from reservoirs, and non-point source pollution; regional stakeholder groups, ongoing conservation challenges.

Martello showed a map of the region with preliminary information from EPD on groundwater sources, NPDES permits and surface water intakes/withdrawals.

Statistics:

- 38 surface water permits

- 336 MGD total permitted flow (monthly average flow)
- 43 groundwater withdrawal permits
- 56 MGD total permitted flow
- 831 agricultural water withdrawal permits
- 121,558 acres total irrigation area
- 4.5 M acres in the basin
- 58.6% forested

Wastewater permits by county (major/minor)

- 207 permitted discharges (total number of permits and breakdown by owner type - majority from municipal WW systems – by type)
- 90.2 MGD total flow

Question: Is South Carolina taken into account with this data? The data does not take into account South Carolina. The volume appears to be inaccurate from the total flow from industrial owners?

Response: An assumed flow may not have been reflected in the data.

The consultant team will investigate along with EPD.

8) Trends, Forces, and Factors that will affect the Future of Water in the Region/Implications of Trends for the Region and Regional Plan

Martello then moved on to trends, forces, and factors and the implications. Martello asked each council member to generate 1-2 ideas individually as to what are the trends, forces, and factors that will be affecting the future of water in the region (1 idea per sheet).

The ideas were grouped together and the clusters were named as follows:

- Economic development (business development, industrial and manufacturing growth/decline)
- Federal projects/lake management (river flows and Corps discharges)
- Interbasin transfers
- TMDLs (tmdl, oxygen levels, mercury levels)
- Shared resources (population growth, water usage, SC/interstate water usage)
- Regulatory (water conservation/regulation, drought, agricultural irrigation)
- Non-point source pollution
- Drought/climate conditions
- Agriculture
- Groundwater impacts/availability

Discussion ensued among council members to further flush out the cluster categories regarding population growth, runoff, etc.

Data needs from consultant team: historic rainfall data

Kennedy then asked the council members to take the cluster categories to develop a story of water for the region. Water Management for Growth (Water management, drought/climate conditions, water supply to support Metro Atlanta growth)

9) Introduction to Population and Employment Forecasts

Martello then moved on to a current and historical context of population and workforce. Martello provided statistical information on the state's growth trends.

Question: One thing to look at is what jobs have an impact on water usage.

Response: The Carl Vinson Institute is looking at total employment, statewide population growth, regional trends in population and employment.

Martello then discussed methods for forecasting population and employment.

Question: Will we breakdown our water consumption needs by users, based on population and employment forecasts? How will forecasts from the Greenville/Spartanburg area be taken into consideration?

Response: EPD will discuss forecasts with South Carolina. Water consumption forecasts will be based on types of user categories.

Question: How do we work with the Corps on lake management issues?

Response: EPD is in discussion with the Corps, particularly regarding the water planning efforts, and it is an ongoing communication process.

10) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Kennedy led the council into the election of Chair and Vice-Chair. The council was given a 5-minute break to finish nominations.

Final Nominations:

Chair

Ron Cross

Mike Eskew

Chris McCorkel

Stan Sheppard

Tom Wiedmeyer

Vice Chair

Barry Cronin

Donald Dye

Toye Hill

Charles Newton

Stan Sheppard

Tom Wiedmeyer

Results:

Chair – Ron Cross

Vice Chair – Charles Newton

Evaluation forms were distributed.

11) Public comments

Peyton Sapp, UGA Cooperative Extension, reiterated assistance to the committee.

Mike Ronick thanked the committee for the work, the use of the facility and lunch.

- Would like for the committee to operate under Roberts Rules of Order?
- Would like for the committee to address who would handle interstate commerce (the buy/sell interstate sale of water)?
- Agricultural ponds may not get credit for return of water through discharge when flows are small.

12) Action Items

- Planning contractor to send Council correspondence via email to choose 3 dates and locations for the next 3 meetings.
- Planning Contractor to provide Council with Corps Drought Contingency Plan.
- Planning Contractor/EPD staff to provide Council with current South Carolina withdrawals.
- Planning Contractor to provide Council with previous work from Bob Kerr or other plans
- Planning Contractor to check on industrial flow numbers.
- Planning Contractor/EPD to provide Council with historic rainfall data.

Meeting adjourned at 3:24 PM.

Meeting Attendees

Council Members:

Bruce Azevedo

Braye Boardman

Charles Cawthon

Ron Cross

Donald Dye

Mike Eskew

Dan Fowler

Patricia Goodwin

Patrick Goran

Larry Guest

Toye Hill

Robert Jenkins

Scott MacGregor

Eddie Madden
Chris McCorkel
Tim McGill
James H. Newsome
Charles Newton
Lewis Sanders
Stan Sheppard
Larry Walker
Tom Wiedmeyer
R. Lee Webster
Rep. Tom McCall

Partnering Agencies and General Public

John Pearson, Sr.

Bob Masse

Michael Ronick

Charles Rice

Rob Pavey

Frank Carl

Jim Hussey

Nancy Bobbitt

Charles Phillips

Sam Booker

*Peyton Sapp (UGA Cooperative Extension)

*Robert Amos (Georgia Soil Water Conservation Commission (GASWCC))

*John Colberg (Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC))

*Rick Hubert (Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB))

*Rahn Milligan (GAWSCC)

*Deatre Denson (Dept of Community Affairs (DCA))

*Gary Black (Georgia Agribusiness)

*Indicates attendee represented an agency