

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch
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To: Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning Council
From: Becky Champion, Assistant Branch Chief, GA EPD
Rick Brownlow, CH2M HILL
Subject: Meeting Summary: Council Meeting 10 on August 31, 2011

Welcome and Introductions

John Bennett gave the introductions and summarized the purpose for the meeting. Tim Mercier gave a short welcome to the council and stakeholders as the local representative for the Blue Ridge area.

Review and discuss comments received on Draft Water Development and Conservation Plan

David Ashburn led the discussion on the public comments. He indicated that there were several handouts that were distributed for the council's review. The first 9 pages were just a summary of the comments that were received and do not require significant discussion with the council. Comments starting on page 10 will need discussion and then we'll decide how to proceed. There is also an errata sheet to be acted upon that includes typos and minor changes needed to the plan identified during the public comment period.

Mr. Bennett noted that many of the comments included in the summary were from outside the CNG area. Mr. Ashburn said that many of the comments were not from local citizens but specific entities with an interest in the implementation of the plan. Tom Bryant asked if we had addressed the comment about updating the population projections after the census data was available. Mr. Ashburn indicated that we did not in the CNG plan but the OPB and UGA will be addressing the changes in the future.

Rick Brownlow reviewed the specific comments:

Item 78 – Discussion on the tentative nature of the CNG goals in the context of environmental protection

Action – Council agreed to stay with the existing language to allow flexibility, add general statement that local governments should consider the recommendations.

Item 79 – Discussion was same as previous comment

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 80 – Discussion on rainwater harvesting/catchment

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 81 – Discussion on making the making adoption of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual mandatory

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 82 – Clarify the future role of the Regional Planning Councils and confirm that their activities will be coordinated

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 83 – Establish future role for the Regional Planning Councils and diverse funding source

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 84 – Each RWP should have reasonable benchmarks to measure progress

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 85 – Establish future role for the RPCs, a funding source, and tie to rule-making

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 86- Impose strict implementation and enforcement of existing un-disturbed buffers

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 87 – supports the universal change of should to shall as in the current ordinance

Action – The council voted to take no action

Item 88 – suggested revisions to power plant water consumption narrative (verbiage provided)

Action – Agreed to add reference to the supplemental document on energy forecast. Also agreed to add text on future demands and returns

Item 89 – request that farmers be consulted in the development of regional nutrient guidelines

Action – Council agreed to drop the word regional and change to “request farmers input in the process”. Add the extension service to the list of responsible parties

Item 90 – Recommend adding the discussion NC DENR coordination regarding impairments to the Hiawassee and Little TN rivers

Action – Recommended change “to seek out opportunities across state lines to address impairment and improvements to interstate waters”. This would be inserted at the top of page 7-2.

Item 91 – Narrative describing the infrastructure pages and methods for deriving tables in section 5 is clearly delineated in the plan or supplemental document

Action – Council agreed to the recommended language

Item 92 – Consider revising table 5-5 to more accurately reflect agricultural permitting and usage

Action – John Bennett noted that there has been significant discussion about this table with the EPD staff, farm bureau, and contractors. He suggested that over the next 5 years additional data should be collected in north Georgia. Information on whether the withdrawals are from streams or farm ponds and irrigation demands would also be relevant. Irwin Bagwell had suggested we include footnote that peak usage could be higher than 19 mgd in the revised table. Tim Mercier commented that the acreage format in the revised table is a good approach but we need to add in the footnote that 19.1 demand may be higher based on crops. The council agreed to include the revised table with the recommended footnote. The goal would be include crop type in the future as well. Mr. Bennett also recommended that we add a recommendation to the state (Section 7.4) to collect better data on agricultural water use, including acreage and crop type and the non-irrigation data on livestock and poultry.

New Item – Forestry commission asked that the council consider recommending implementation of the Better Back Roads program to address sedimentation and erosion.

Action – Council agreed to include a bullet under WQ-3 MP of “Consider implementation of the guidelines in the Georgia Back Roads program.

Errata Sheet – David asked for the council to accept the recommended changes in the errata sheet. Lee Mulkey noted there was a typo on one of the changes.

Action – Council agreed to accept the changes in the errata sheet

David made the motion that the council recommends the plan to the EPD for approval.

Action – Council unanimously agreed

Becky Champion thanked the council for their participation and she gave David and John framed artwork including antique post cards.

Discuss future of CNG Water Planning Council

David noted that he and John met with the Regional Commissions (RCs) to discuss the potential for their staff to provide assistance with implementation. The RCs indicated that they would be interested. He asked Becky Champion if the state had a plan or recommendations for implementation and she said that EPD had not provided a recommendation yet. He suggested that we give the state a few months to try to come up with something and if there is no firm recommendation then the council could move forward with RCs. Tim Bowden suggested that we take the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) approach. Mr. Ashburn reminded the council does not have the legislative mandate that MNGWPD does. Members discussed the representation issue and how the two RCs provide political representation from across the CNG.

Brook Anderson suggested that the CNG look at the Northwest Georgia Regional Water Resources Partnership. Mark Marlowe said that the partnership would be interested in expanding the group, if needed. Mr. Ashburn said that the RCs would be the overall management organization and then the partnership could provide specific assistance. Don Cope noted that the RCs have the responsibility and authority to actual assist communities in plan implementation across a variety of areas. He suggested that the RCs work with the partnership to be their

technical support entity. The RCs would fund the Partnership through their fees rather than folks having to pay into both organizations.

Action – John Bennett recommended that by November 1st, if the state has not come up with a specific implementation approach, that the members of the CNG meet with the RCs to move forward with seeking their support. Mr. Cope suggested that at this meeting we try to get all the council members at that RC meeting and to have the partnership give a presentation on their history and membership. The council approved this approach.

Elected Official and Public Comments

Norman Pope from Pickens County thanked the group for their efforts.

Wrap Up/Adjournment

The council discussed holding a meeting in late November/early December depending on GA EPD action on the plan and implementation process.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Coosa – North Georgia Water Planning Council, August 31, 2011 CM#10

Members Present

1. David Ashburn
2. Kenneth Beasley
3. John Bennett
4. Tim Bowden
5. Keith Coffey (alternate)
6. Don Cope
7. Jerry Crawford (on behalf of Kelly Cornwell)
8. Pat Gober
9. Haynes Johnson (alternate)
10. Sherry Loudermilk
11. Tim Mercier
12. Lee Mulkey (on behalf of Gerald Dunham)
13. Tom O’Bryant
14. Lamar Paris
15. Sam Payne

16. Frank Riley
17. Denise Wood (on behalf of David Pennington)

Members Not Present:

1. Doug Anderton
2. Irwin Bagwell
3. Mike Berg
4. Charlie Bethel
5. Katie Dempsey (ex officio)
6. Stephen Gray
7. Jerry Jennings
8. Anne Kaiser
9. Dick Martin
10. Todd Pealock
11. Chip Pearson (ex officio)
12. Jimmy Petty
13. David Westmoreland

Partnering & Other State Agencies

1. John Damer, GA DNR
2. Lydia Doyle, Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/>)
3. John Loughridge, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

GA Environmental Protection Division

1. Becky Champion, Assistant Branch Chief for Coosa-Tallapoosa-Tennessee Basins
2. Michelle Vincent

CH2M HILL

1. Doug Baughman
2. Rick Brownlow
3. Brian Skeens