

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 6 on June 14, 2010

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman John Bennett welcomed the group to the meeting and asked for introductions. Chairman Bennett then introduced Todd Pelock, CEO of Habersham Electric Membership Corporation (HEMC), Doug Vermilya, Habersham County Commissioner and Barbara Kesler, City Manager of Clarkesville. They welcomed the group and gave some local background for the area. Rick Brownlow then gave the overview of the day's agenda. He showed the schedule and where we are in the process of developing the regional plan.

Presentation by Georgia Power

Mr. Brownlow introduced Tanya Blalock from Georgia Power to speak to the group about Georgia Power's environmental affairs and water resources and the topic of energy and water planning. She explained how water is used in the thermoelectric process and how GP goes about their process of water planning. She noted that cooling towers are the reason for consumptive use that and future environmental regulations will require these cooling towers more as they help to reduce the heat load on the river. She also explained the complex process that they go through for their "Integrated Resource Planning". She explained the mix of their generation capabilities noting that peaking power comes from combustion turbines that use very little water. Intermediate power comes from combined cycle plants that use once through cooling and base power comes from the large plants that typically use cooling towers and have higher water consumption. She elaborated on the generator type that can be used for peaking and explained that steam uses 0.8 gal/Kwh and combined cycle uses 0.22 gal/Kwh. She said that a household probably uses around 20 gallons per day of water to supply its power. She then discussed their involvement with the state water plan. Their energy water forecasting should be ready in the fall and that they consider many factors including environmental constraints, water availability, etc. Several council members noted that cost considerations and benefits should be considered in all

decisions, and also the complex process of locating power production facilities. They also discussed how power is frequently produced at one location and then transmitted to where it is needed and asked whether we should consider options to do the same with water.

A question came up on hydropower generation and the impact on stream flows, especially during low flow periods. The group also discussed how hydropower generation from the large U.S. Army Corp of Engineers reservoirs should be considered in future energy production. There was some discussion on hydropower generation and how much the cost has increased in North Georgia due to restrictions on flows, etc. Ms. Blaylock mentioned that they do not expect any new hydropower generating facilities.

Update on Final Water Demand Forecasts and Resource Assessment Modeling

Brian Skeens provided an overview of the water demand forecast updates. He noted that there have not been any significant changes to the water demand forecasts. It was asked if there had been revisions to address comments at the subcommittee meetings. Mr. Skeens indicated that they are working on some of the comments now but the numbers presented do not reflect the comments. For example, we are still trying to get data from American Water in Tennessee. There was a question about whether the data was available on the web site. Mr. Skeens noted that the previous presentations from CM 5 are on the web site.

Several questions were asked concerning winery use and the group discussed the need to see the permitted vs. actual use as well. Chairman Bennett suggested that we add a footnote on the permitted agriculture capacity to note that it is much more than the anticipated use. It was also noted that there are also a number smaller users that are not permitted. Chairman Bennett noted that the point is that the 2050 projected use for agriculture is a small fraction of the existing permitted agriculture capacity. It was agreed that we need to make sure we note this in the plan.

It was also noted that we also need to recognize that there is going to be global food production deficit in the future and that this may actually increase further the need for agriculture production. It was asked how were golf courses and reuse factored into the analysis?

Doug Baughman gave an overview of the resource assessments and mentioned that EPD is producing some additional future assessment runs for use by the councils, and the status of each for the three resource assessments. He then showed a new table of available assimilative capacity using existing permitted limits in each basin. It was mentioned that although Coahulla Creek is showing with no additional assimilative capacity, that is wholly attributable to issues in Tennessee and that our planning needs to reflect these issues.

The group discussed issues surrounding the available assimilative capacity in Upper Chattahoochee and the impacts that are in the Metro District and associated with TMDLs. Mr. Baughman recognized that there may be some restrictions on upstream dischargers and non-point

source limitations based on TMDL study results. We will find out the status of those models and studies. The group also discussed issues associated with septic tanks around Lake Lanier.

Mr. Brownlow made a comment about recommendations on policy that our council may want to make, that affect our council, but can only be implemented by folks outside or on the periphery of our council. Chairman Bennett echoed this comment and made a point that there are many things that can be done outside of our council that will have a much larger affect than what we can do within our council. The group agreed to discuss this issue at the next meeting in more detail.

Update on Management Practice Guidance

Chairman Bennett discussed a meeting that he, Vice-chair David Ashburn, and Becky Champion had with EPD Director Allen Barnes. He explained that the Director was very engaged in the Coosa – North Georgia issues and they had a good discussion regarding interactions between our council and Tennessee and Alabama. He indicated that the council should feel free to engage in discussions with all stakeholders (those within Georgia and those outside of Georgia). Chairman Bennett indicated that he was very encouraged by this discussion.

Mr. Brownlow also directed the Council's attention to a recent memo from Director Barnes noting how it related to the selection of management practices by the Council.

Management Practice Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Brownlow began the discussion by reviewing some of the key issues that were discussed in the subcommittee meetings. He noted that although the council encompassed a number of separate rivers basins, the issues raised in each subcommittee were very similar. He asked representatives of each basin subcommittee to provide some further discussion of the issues at each meeting.

David Ashburn began discussing the Tennessee basin. He said they were able to review what others had done, but they felt like they were water-rich in the Tennessee basin. He commented that they had many non-council members at the subcommittee meetings, and that involvement like that has likely contributed to such a large attendance at today's meeting.

Tom O'Bryant went next to discuss the Chattahoochee basin. They focused on agricultural permits and the high capacity of those. He also mentioned that industry is changing from rural to seeing some increased growth. There were concerns raised about USGS data that was used and private systems being properly incorporated into the forecasts. He explained that they felt there were opportunities for new and increased storage because of the region's topography. They also had a long discussion about how all the water planning nodes for their basin are located below our region and may not accurately predict localized issues. The Council also discussed the use of reuse and that it should be applied on a site specific basis. There was also a comment about

managing the watershed as a whole, even though there are jurisdictional and boundaries that cross responsibilities. That needs to be overcome by those working together on a watershed or statewide basis. It was also mentioned that a watershed association is a way to get at this, in the same way that the Soque River Watershed Association has done in Habersham County. The Federal 319 grant program has been a good source of funding for this type of work. It was mentioned that if there's a large urbanized area, they'll have a set of stormwater requirements that the rest of the watershed doesn't necessarily have. The group discussed that this might be an area where District-style requirements across the entire region to ensure consistency might be appropriate. Mr. Baughman clarified that stormwater requirements are a good thing and not necessarily an impediment to development, if everyone in the watershed implements in the same way.

There was some discussion about 303(d) listing standards and following up on the accuracy of their applicability to the specific areas. Forestry representative also mentioned that they are tracking BMP compliance, since 2006, and have seen better compliance, and improved education by truckers and loggers. The group discussed fecal coliform, using "source identification" to determine if the source of pollution is due to human interaction or natural animals. The costs can be an issue, but it can be very helpful.

Mike Berg discussed Etowah issues, said they have similar issues, such as septic tanks, relationship to the Metro District, and they had an extensive discussion on how this council moves forward after the plan is developed. He also discussed buffers, water quality credit trading and the Upper Etowah Group studies. These kinds of studies should be done elsewhere. The big issue is what to do with the 10,000 acre tract of Dawson Forest.

Don Cope discussed the Oostanaula Issues, particularly the limits at the Alabama line in terms of flow and nutrients. He is also concerned about the disconnect between the councils doing the planning and the group doing the negotiating on the ACT basin. He's concerned that the negotiations are quiet. Understands that it is necessary at first, but at some point that needs to be made open to our planning process and integrated into it. David Ashburn said that Director Barnes instructed Chairman Bennett to invite folks from Alabama. We'll consider inviting AL representatives to next council meeting in Rome.

Chairman Bennett mentioned that another issue related to water quality is chicken litter, and we need to find a way to manage it appropriately. It was mentioned that growers do have nutrient management plans and that much of it is being exported to South Georgia for fertilizer. It was discussed that it's not as much of an issue as it used to be. Justin Ellis, director of Soque River Watershed Association, mentioned that they see chicken litter as a benefit, mentioned compost, and they're in discussions to use it to manage erosion issues.

David Ashburn discussed interbasin transfer, specifically related to the Tennessee basin, and that

they would like to keep the water for use in Georgia before it drains into Tennessee.

Management Practice Selection Process

Mr. Skeens gave an overview of the water stewardship act and the recommended demand management practices. Key elements include requirements for state agencies, minimum standards for water audits, outdoor water restrictions (local governments can apply for exemptions), agricultural permitting (classifications for active, inactive, or unused) will require inactive permits to expire after two years. The council asked about the verification process for determining active permits. Another new requirement will be sub-metering of multi-unit buildings. It was asked if that applied to mobile home parks. David Ashburn indicated that he understood that it did apply to mobile home parks. Mr. Skeens noted that this applies primarily to new development. The act also requires use of water conserving fixtures in new development and high efficiency cooling towers. A joint commission on water supply was also created. Mr. Skeens noted that these are all new minimum requirements. The group asked about the enforcement of the new requirements. Mr. Skeens noted that the enforcement is at the local level.

Mr. Skeens also summarized the water conservation framework being developed by EPD to assist councils with these management practices. He noted that water conservation is mandated in the state water plan and the framework has been developed to help the councils develop their recommendations. There are 4 tiers:

- Tier 1 - basic water conservation practices
- Tier 2 - optional basic water conservation practices to comply with the Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP). Municipal providers can choose up to 12 practices
- Tier 3 - optional practices above the requirements for all users (required by rules or regulations).
- Tier 4 - New requirements to be applied in areas with existing or future gaps in water supply.

He noted that it will be the council's responsibility to identify the level of water demand practice implementation that is appropriate.

Mr. Brownlow gave an overview of the management practice evaluation process. He handed out the proposed evaluation criteria. He described the end goal of the process, which is to identify and prioritize the practices such that they meet the vision and goals of the council in a consensus-driven process.

The council was asked if they liked the process, and would like to proceed. Chairman Bennett agreed. There was a suggestion to make sure to account for a cost consideration of the practices,

and not leave it out. Question about the cost, is it customer cost or utility cost of the practice?

Review and Discuss Initial Management Practices

The council broke into four groups to discuss the categories of management practices (Demand Management-Conservation, Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality). Each group discussed edits/additions/deletions to the list and the full council reviewed the results of the group work and refined the list to a total number of sixty-one (61) candidate management practices that will move forward for prioritization.

The council then discussed the role of the Management Practice Prioritization Committee to conduct the scoring with the basin subcommittees and full council having final say on the practices to be recommended. Volunteers for the scoring committee included: Sherry Loudermilk, Tom O'Bryant, Stephen Gray, David Ashburn, Irwin Bagwell, Frank Riley, Pat Gober, and Haynes Johnson.

Discuss Development of Water Development and Conservation Plan

Mr. Brownlow also directed the council's attention to the outline of the Water Development and Conservation Plan that was in the council materials. He explained that the staff had been working on developing a number of sections of the document and that the council would be provided a draft of these introductory material for review by the end of the month.

Elected Official and Public Comments

Brook Anderson asked if the council had thought about establishing a committee to look at how the council will function and fund itself in the future.

Wrap Up/Council Meeting Evaluation

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Coosa – North Georgia Water Planning Council, July 14, 2010 CM#6

Members Present

1. David Ashburn
2. Irwin Bagwell
3. Kenneth Beasley
4. John Bennett
5. Mike Berg
6. Tim Bowden
7. Chris Butts (on behalf of Sherry Loudermilk)
8. Don Cope
9. Keith Coffey (alternate)
10. Pat Gober
11. Stephen Gray
12. Anne Kaiser
13. Tim Mercier
14. Lee Mulkey (on behalf of Gerald Dunham)
15. Tom O'Bryant

16. Lamar Paris
17. Todd Pealock
18. David Pennington
19. Frank Riley
20. David Westmoreland

Members Not Present:

1. Doug Anderton
2. Charlie Bethel
3. Kelly Cornwell
4. Katie Dempsey (ex officio)
5. Jerry Jennings
6. Haynes Johnson (alternate)
7. Dick Martin
8. Sam Payne
9. Chip Pearson (ex officio)
10. Jimmy Petty

Elected Officials

1. Sonny James, Habersham County
2. Douglas Vermilya, Habersham County
3. Denise Wood, City of Dalton

Partnering & Other State Agencies

1. John Damer, GA DNR
2. Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/>)
3. Greg Sheppard, Lumpkin County Extension Coordinator (<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/>)

GA Environmental Protection Division

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

CH2M HILL

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