

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 7 on September 15, 2010

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman John Bennett welcomed the group to the meeting and gave a background of the area, rivers, history and downtown area. Chairman Bennett then introduced Floyd Commission Chair Eddie Lumsden to welcome the group. He also discussed how the progress they have made in Rome and Floyd County is a result of a plan, and while a plan takes time to implement, it has great results. Rick Brownlow then gave an overview of the day's agenda. He referred to the handouts and, among other things, made specific mention of the Joint Meeting on October 6th in Macon. He then showed the schedule and where the North-Coosa Council is in the process of developing the regional plan. Chairman Bennett stated that he and Vice-Chairman Ashburn would leave the room for the next agenda item.

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mr. Brownlow mentioned that Chairman Bennett and Vice-Chairman Ashburn have expressed an interest in continuing in their roles. Following discussion a motion to continue with the current leadership was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Bennett returned to the meeting and thanked the group for their confidence. He mentioned that he would like to emphasize recommendations beyond regional management practices, specifically state recommendations.

Weiss Lake TMDL - Georgia Phosphorus Reduction Requirements - Northwest Georgia Regional Water Resources Partnership (NWGRWRP)

Chairman Bennett introduced Mark Marlowe on behalf of the NWGRWRP to give an overview of their organization, purpose, and activities. He discussed that they are evaluating expanding the scope of the partnership to include all 18 counties in the CNG water planning region.

Mr. Marlowe introduced Margaret Tanner from MACTEC to give a presentation on Phosphorus

in Georgia Waters. Ms. Tanner gave a presentation consisting of the following contents: overview of phosphorus and TMDL issues, the Lake Weiss TMDL, impacts on Georgia dischargers, current total phosphorus loading and the sources, new proposed standards and possible future implementation scenarios. Chairman Bennett asked about the source of the 30% phosphorus reduction requirement in the Lake Weiss TMDL. Mr. Tanner indicated that EPA did the study. There was additional discussion about costs and potential solutions.

Review of Instream Flow Policy

Mr. Brownlow introduced Becky Champion to discuss the Georgia Instream Flow Policy. He also introduced Michelle Vincent to discuss the available funding from 319 grants to address watershed projects. She noted that there is \$100,000 available for each Council. Lee Mulkey suggested the Soque River watershed group and volunteered to obtain information about their successes. This funding is part of the normal 319 program funding, but is earmarked for the councils. It has the same requirements but a different deadline than the regular 319 program. Ms. Champion gave a presentation on instream flow policy and how the flow regime was developed for the resource assessment modeling. EPD also uses these flow regimes and minimum flows in their permitting activities.

Resource Assessment Gaps

Mr. Brownlow introduced Doug Baughman to go over the results from the resource assessments. Mr. Baughman highlighted that the purpose for this presentation is to support the council's discussion on recommendations for management practices. The basis of selection for these management practices is the results of the resource assessments and any gaps that are identified. He then reviewed future resource assessments, first for surface water availability. There are gaps for the Gaylesville node 9% of the time, approximately 6 cfs of flow. He showed the list of permitted withdrawals, as well as the permitted discharges in that node. He also showed the gaps in the New England and Chickamauga nodes as well. There was discussion about how much of the gap is created because the wastewater is discharged into the same basin but downstream of the node used for measurement. Possible future discussion about small location issues versus overall water availability issues at the planning nodes was mentioned. For example Walker County wastewater goes to the Moccasin Bend system in Tennessee. There was a question about unavoidable consumptive losses. There was discussion about not mentioning "centralized" sewer as much as emphasizing that sewer collection and treatment is being provided for users so that water is returned to streams.

Mr. Baughman discussed water quality gaps, both DO and nutrient related. He identified the challenge of addressing nonpoint source contributions. There is a direct way to affect DO issues, primarily through the permitting of point sources. The summary in the presentation framed the situation and some potential solutions for the council to consider when selecting management

practices to help address identified gaps.

Rome Lock and Dam Tour

The Council and other attendees took a break to visit the Rome Lock and Dam.

After the group re-convened to the meeting room, the Council discussed the future meeting date, which was tentatively set for Wednesday, November 17, in Blue Ridge, Georgia.

Next, there was a discussion about the Joint Meeting and potential people to invite to participate on panels for identified topics. A number of council members volunteered to participate and were asked to talk to Ms. Vincent about additional details.

Discuss Regulatory and Policy Recommendations

Mr. Brownlow went over a list of recommendations for the State to implement from the list of scored management practices. The Council selected and agreed upon four practices from the scoring process. These are: 1) commercial water audits, 2) meter agriculture water withdrawals, 3) study septic systems effect on water quality, and 4) conduct long-term ambient trend and biological monitoring. Some modifications were made to the septic recommendation to remove “failing”, as well as to the monitoring recommendation. The monitoring recommendation was changed to direct that the State support maintaining monitoring and loosen the restrictions to allow volunteer sampling data to be used to assess watershed conditions. Mike Berg noted that funding these monitoring programs was going to be very important. He mentioned Corps of Engineers funding through the Planning Assistance to States authority as one approach, and suggested a fee on the water bills as a dedicated source to support ongoing monitoring. There was also discussion on possibly recommending that the state develop some BMP demonstration projects to evaluate their effectiveness. The discussion related to the need for comprehensive monitoring with some council members indicating that local monitoring would also be required to assist with “de-listing” specific streams listed as not meeting water quality standards (303(d) listed streams). There was also a suggestion for the State to fund initial studies on the feasibility of water quality credit trading in specific watersheds.

Discussion about the effects and needs created by the new High Efficiency Toilet standard for 2012 specified in the Water Stewardship Act took place. The Council agreed to make a note requesting the State to consider all relevant implementation components of this regulation. CH2M HILL, the planning contractor, will check the State Agency Report, consult with WPD about this, and report back to Mr. Mulkey (Habersham) and Don Cope.

Mr. Cope mentioned that the Council needs to know how the recommendations in the Plan will be implemented through permitting and rulemaking. He suggested writing a formal letter from Council leadership to the EPD director to get a direct answer.

Next there was a review of recommendations that were raised in previous meetings. The first

item discussed was how the Council will move forward after the initial plan is developed. Everyone agreed that specific recommendations on this need to be provided and addressed by the next meeting.

The second item discussed is the disconnect between Council planning efforts and ACT basin negotiations. Emphasis was made on the hypothetical situation that the Council ends up in a different place than the State negotiations and the potential problem this could create.

The third item discussed was poultry litter. This was changed to “animal husbandry” to improve management of nutrients in general.

The fourth item (interbasin transfers and the Tennessee River) was mentioned but not discussed in detail.

Management Practice Scoring Workshop Discussion

Mr. Brownlow asked Vice-Chairman Ashburn to go over the process of scoring the management practices. Using the new reservoir management practice as an example, Vice-Chairman Ashburn explained the process in detail, and pointed to the handouts with the scoring results the management practice subcommittee meeting and conference calls. He also mentioned the follow-up conference call to fine-tune the scoring.

Mike Berg mentioned that an “outcomes-based” approach was not used, but that he recognized that this could not be done without knowing the magnitude of the problem. Mr. Brownlow mentioned that the scoring should be used as a guideline to select which measures to select for their basin subcommittee.

Discuss and Select Initial Management Practices

Mr. Brownlow instructed the council members to gather into workgroups of basin subcommittees and vote thumbs up or thumbs down on each management practice and/or add management practices that had been removed and report back. The individual basin committee scores were entered into a spreadsheet, and specific practices where there was not 100% agreement were discussed. These included installing 1.28 gpf toilets in government buildings (Mr. Berg noted that Dawson did a study that showed the payback was not beneficial), conservation pricing (the Oostanaula basin does not want to require this), distribute low flow retrofit kits, rain sensor shutoff switches on new irrigation systems, wastewater education, and stream buffer protection (with the caveat of referring to the Upper Etowah plan, instead of HCP in the references). Other comments from Oostanaula included management practice numbers 20 and 21 were changed to “encourage,” number 45 “as recommended by NRCS” was added, numbers 41 to 44 were modified to be implemented based on local entity needs only, and for number 55, “recommend” was added. Management practice number 5 for non-potable reuse with agreement from all was added back. For the Tennessee, Part V in number 55 was removed.

There was a question about why ASR (aquifer storage and recovery) was removed and Mr. Brownlow noted that ASR is covered in groundwater wells management practices.

Mr. Berg expressed interest in the next steps. He wants to see the quantitative benefits of implementation of these practices. He noted as an example they could do a lot of conservation and it would not make any difference in meeting water supply needs when compared to developing a new reservoir. Mr. Brownlow noted that the Metro District had specifically included facilities to meet water needs beyond their 2035 planning horizon.

Elected Official and Public Comments

Joe Cook addressed the council. He thanked the council for the instream flow presentation, and recommended the EPD Scientific Engineering and Advisory Panel give an additional presentation. He also said the reason the interim instream flow policy is in place because the 7Q10 was not determined to be protective of the aquatic resources. He would like the Council to be aware that the resource assessments are based on this flawed instream flow policy.

Brooke Anderson made a point to EPD that they need to step up and tell the Council members what the end product is supposed to be, and that Council members need answers, specifically regarding what the document will look like. He said the Council is making decisions today that will affect future generations. He also said the Council needs to decide what the Council will be beyond this effort and how to fund it. He said they need to decide what the Council will look like, if anything.

Haynes Johnson would like to follow up on Joe Cook's recommendation to contact the Scientific Advisory Panel and recommend that a study be performed. Vice-Chairman Ashburn responded that there can be a follow up discussion at the next Council Meeting in November. Mr. Johnson also noted that the council should consider a presentation on water quality credit trading at either the Joint Meeting or the next Upper Coosa Council meeting.

Mr. Johnson will have Mr. Brownlow circulate a draft resolution for discussion at the next meeting.

Wrap Up/Council Meeting Evaluation

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Coosa – North Georgia Water Planning Council, September 15, 2010 CM#7

Members Present

1. David Ashburn
2. Irwin Bagwell
3. Kenneth Beasley
4. John Bennett
5. Mike Berg
6. Tim Bowden
7. Keith Coffey (alternate)
8. Don Cope
9. Jerry Crawford (on behalf of Kelly Cornwell
10. Katie Dempsey (ex officio)
11. Stephen Gray
12. Jerry Jennings
13. Haynes Johnson (alternate)
14. Tim Mercier
15. Lee Mulkey (on behalf of Gerald Dunham)

16. Tom O'Bryant
17. Lamar Paris
18. David Pennington
19. Frank Riley

Members Not Present:

1. Doug Anderton
2. Charlie Bethel
3. Pat Gober
4. Sherry Loudermilk
5. Anne Kaiser
6. Dick Martin
7. Sam Payne
8. Chip Pearson (ex officio)
9. Todd Pealock
10. Jimmy Petty
11. David Westmoreland

Elected Officials

1. Eddie Lumsden , Floyd County
2. Denise Wood, City of Dalton

Partnering & Other State Agencies

1. Brett Albanase, GA DNR
2. Lydia Doyle, Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/>)

GA Environmental Protection Division

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

CH2M HILL

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