



Georgia's State Water Plan

To: Coosa-North Georgia (CNG) Water Planning Council
From: Christine Voudy, GA EPD
Brian Skeens, Jacobs
Michelle Vincent, Jacobs
Subject: **Meeting Summary: CNG Regional Water Planning Council Meeting**
Date: **September 30, 2020**

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council Meeting held virtually on September 30, 2020 on the Teams meeting platform. This memorandum provides a summary of the items discussed at the Council Meeting that was held from approximately 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Brooke Anderson welcomed the group to the meeting. Brian Skeens gave a roll call of the participants to allow them to introduce themselves. The Chairman Anderson discussed the recent meeting schedule. The last scheduled meeting (March) was cancelled due to Coronavirus, and the most recent meeting was held in October 2019.

2. Council Business

Members briefly reviewed the meeting agenda and meeting summary from the October 9, 2019 Council Meeting. No changes or additions were recommended to the last Council meeting's summary or agenda, Haynes Johnson motion to approve the meeting summary and agenda as presented. Second from Mike Berg, Motion carried without dissent, approved unanimously by the Council members.

Chairman Anderson asked for an update on the Seed Grant Status.

Seed Grant Updates and Upcoming Opportunities

Gretchen Lugthart from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission provided an update on the FY2018 Seed Grant Project – Watershed Management Plan for Woodward Creek.

The project location is Woodward Creek in the Upper Oostanaula Watershed. The creek is currently 303(d) listed as impaired for fecal coliform. The main objectives of the project are to remove that listing by collecting updated sampling data, updating the watershed management plan, and performing educational public outreach.

The following information was shared during the presentation:

- Preliminary macroinvertebrate info (see slide).
- Dissolved Oxygen within state standards.
- All sites with elevated E. coli in summer are in the band of pasture in the middle of the watershed. Some management practice options to focus on include restoring the missing buffers on tributaries within the pastureland use, septic system repair, agricultural BMPs, education and outreach.
- Maintaining forested land will keep drinking water treatment costs lower.
- Additional sampling also recommended.
- Some educational and public involvement activities are on hold due to public health issues.
- Watershed Management Plan is completed and is currently under review by GA EPD.

Question: How to get copies of the presentation?

- Meeting materials will be posted on the Council website.

Question: How to get a link to the study itself?

- Will be included with meeting summary, which will also be emailed to the Council.

The presenter discussed the following regarding the cattle experiment station:

- Had talked about getting a project specific to them.
- Field work has been slowed down.
- Possible rain garden or changing how the utility power line is managed.
- Bridge will be replaced.

Chairman Anderson gave an update on the 2019 Seed grant project: Partnership has provided a \$25,000 match to EPD's \$75,000 grant to do a Coosa North Georgia region-wide 303(d) listed streams evaluation and prioritization. Tetrtech is going to develop a prioritization tool to allow information to be put into it and allow all 303(d) listed streams to be prioritized and evaluated. All cities and counties are to evaluate streams and prioritize funding for 319 grants and other activities to try to get streams delisted. Once initial prioritization is complete, the Partnership and Tetrtech will monitor some reaches of streams for evaluation to see if they can be delisted and removed from the 303(d) list. The project was converted from a seed grant to a 319 funded project. The contract and grant funds were successfully moved about 30 days ago. The project will last about 18 months with 12 months of stream monitoring. The project has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will serve to make project better due to additional planning efforts.

Where do we go from here for the next seed grant project? The North Georgia Water Resources Partnership (Partnership) met virtually specifically to talk about seed grant opportunities. The Partnership recommends to the Council that the next seed grant focus on promotion of septic tank

management, consistent with Wastewater Management Practice WW-3 from the Regional Water Plan (RWP). Possible objectives for the project include:

- Develop policies to transition areas from septic to sewer where feasible.
- Develop educational information regarding septic tank management.
- Certain watersheds are heavily impacted, including those in Walker County. Walker County has agreed to help fund a portion of the project with watershed protection plan.
- Develop and implement a pumpout program to assist property owners with repair or enhancement of septic tanks.
- Develop an implementation of maintenance and rehabilitation of septic tanks in the region. As the Council moves forward with an update to the RWP, the additional information gained from this study could be incorporated into the RWP.
- The Partnership will provide \$25,000 toward the grant.

Chairman Anderson said that a letter of support for the septic tank management project is needed from the Council. The chairman asked for a motion to approve the letter of support. The motion was made by Mike Berg and second was by Haynes Johnson. The Motion carried without dissent, with unanimous approval from the council. **4. Council Updates**

GA EPD Updates

Industrial and Energy Water and Wastewater Forecasting

Christine Voudy from GA EPD gave an update on Regional Water Planning, including planning process, resource assessments, and water and wastewater forecasts. Industrial Water demand forecast will be updated for this round of planning. A group of industrial stakeholders from around the state was formed and held an initial meeting on June 3.

Florida v Georgia

The case is fully briefed and is scheduled to be heard by Supreme Court in 2021. It is anticipated that a ruling will be issued before end of term in June 2021. See the attached slides and the website below for more details.

www.ca10.uscourts.gov/special-master-142

<https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/florida-v-georgia-2/>

Regional Water Plan Seed Grants

The call for seed grant applications is now open. Meetings must be by October 16, and the deadline for application submittal to GA EPD is October 31.

Council Appointments

The Governor's office is beginning to reach out to people on the lists GA EPD provided, but the process is moving slowly. GA EPD will continue to reach out and gently move the process along.

Municipal Demand Forecasting

The municipal stakeholder group met on June 3, and the process continues to move forward. Brooke Anderson is the CNG representative on the stakeholder group. The topics below were covered during the discussion. Please see the attached slides for more details.

- Self-supply municipal demand.
- Updated per capita demand based on GA EPD water audit submissions for systems greater than 3,300.
- For high per capita, tracking down potential industrial users, adjusting as necessary.
- Municipal public supply – transfers factored into different counties. 30 county to county transfers documented.
- Municipal wastewater - % on septic tanks is from Georgia public health or census characteristics. Direct discharge and land application from GA EPD data.

Question: For the Transfer information, are you distinguishing between short-term vs long-term transfers?

- Not currently but we could look at them and see what stands out.

Water Quality Updates

Liz Booth from GA EPD gave the Council an update on the water quality work being conducted in support of regional planning. Assimilative capacity assessment uses a variety of models and then incorporates numerous sources of available data. Models can be used to determine if an area/reach has limited or no assimilative capacity available now and/or future permitted needs.

Ms. Booth discussed the information below. Please see the attached slides for more details.

- Models developed for the state, the parameters of concern, and the water quality standards in effect.
- In North Georgia, many of the streams are designated and primary or secondary trout streams, which have standards for DO and temperature changes.
- Showed results of the available assimilative capacity.
- Reduction requirements of Total Phosphorus crossing state line Coosa River. DO and temperature levels at Coosa River at state line continue to improve. PFAS and PFOA have areas in Coosa River where data show above health limit advisory of 70 ng/l. Focus on Dalton Areas and Catoosa River. Found a couple locations above human health advisory levels. Collected data to try to determine sources of PFOA – Trion area. Biosolids being land applied. Initiating a targeted PFOS monitoring plan for State and starting in North Georgia area. PFAS Monitoring sites. 110 public water systems. Completed by first quarter 2021.

Ms. Booth discussed possible changes to future permits, including tighter BOD, DO, TP and TN limits. There may be new temperature limits, and there is a possibility that facilities may receive limits for emerging pollutants.

Question: Have other states have reached out and set their own limits on PFOAs?

- They are still in the monitoring phase. Agencies try to monitor the areas of the state and ensure public health before issuing any standards or advisories.

Question: Are there changes to the definition of “Waters” and what requires discharge permit?

- No, a lot of this has to do with a wetland and whether it is hydrologically connected. This is generally avoided.

Question: Is sampling being done in other parts of the state?

- Yes, but North Georgia is being done first, and then sampling will extend to other parts of the state.

There is a GIS Story map online that was prepared by GA EPD.

Question: Is the state considering remediation?

- No, the State is not planning to do any remediation. There is a lawsuit pending, filed by some residents of Alabama that may impact remediation.

5. Metro District Updates

Danny Johnson with the Metro District provided the Council with an update on the Metro District planning process and schedule. Jacobs has been selected as the contractor to support the District planning efforts. Technical resources will be developed to help support governments in the district with their master planning, including a guidance document on drought response and residential water demands. Looking forward to keeping communication going.

Question: When looking at residential and multiple unit housing, one growing sector is “Active adult” senior living. Is there any breakdown of that as a category?

- Good point, the District might consider a breakdown of that. Retirement communities tend to use far less water and wastewater.

Statewide Biosolids Management Survey

Disposal of biosolids to landfills has become more costly and difficult due to recent issues with slope instability. Facilities accepting high amounts of biosolids need to evaluate engineering design elements and should obtain a permit renewal if landfills are accepting biosolids. The cost to dispose of biosolids was originally about \$0.35 a ton. Now the cost is in the range of \$0.65 to more than \$1.00. A GAWP task force collected survey data from 50+ communities and 99 facilities to investigate the issue.

Using the results of the survey, GEFA is looking at management options, possible regional solutions, and funding opportunities. More utilities are looking at advanced drying, and land application is a possibility. However, PFAS/PFOA and available land are a concern. Incineration is also possible, but also come with fuel costs and air quality concerns.

Question: Is there a difference between biosolids and leachate?

- Yes, leachate is the liquid that percolates or “leaches” through the waste down to the bottom liner system of the landfill. Biosolids are solids or sludge from the wastewater process.

Question: The average wastewater treatment plant cannot remove everything from leachate?

- Wastewater treatment facilities are designed to treat regulated substances and are not designed to treat the wide range of unregulated substances. New technologies may be emerging, such as work by Dr. Huang at the University of Georgia to test technologies for the removal of PFAS from water and wastewater systems.

6. Comments from Non-Council Members, Visitors, or the General Public

Question: Mike Berg requested an update on council appointments and asked if the Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives has made any appointments?

- GA EPD has checked with the Governor’s office, and they have been contacting the people on the list that GA EPD has recommended. GA EPD will continue to follow up with Governor’s office to ensure it remains a priority.

Question: Is it easy for a municipality to accept leachate? Is it just a matter of saying “we’ll take it”?

- Chairman Anderson responded that leachate is a very concentrated waste that comes from bottom of a landfill, and it must be treated somewhere. Municipalities that have the ability to treat it within their GA EPD permit can enter into contract with a waste company or hauler. Typically, GA EPD is notified, but if effluent limits are met at the treatment plant, then everything is up to the plant’s discretion. There can be a disconnect between the contents leachate and what treatment plants are capable of removing. Not all parameters are specified within a wastewater permit, and other substances that undergo treatment may come out in the sludge rather than the plant discharge. Municipal treatment facilities are not required to accept leachate. Liz Booth added that EPD has produced a new GIS story map on the subject of PFOAs. It explains what they are, where EPD is monitoring for them, and other helpful background information. One clarification: Drinking water systems do test for some “unregulated” contaminants, but there is just not a current standard for them.

7. Next Steps and Wrap Up

Brian Skeens discussed items that are upcoming, including seed grant deadlines, and forecasting stakeholder meetings. He discussed potential topics for next Council meeting and requested that email

possible ideas be emailed to Jacobs, Brooke Anderson or Christine Voudy. Brooke said the next CNG Council meeting would be likely be held in the spring of 2021.

8. Adjourn

Chairman Anderson thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 3:06 PM.

Attachments and Hyperlinks

1. Attachment: Meeting Presentation Slides
2. Link: Florida v Georgia
www.ca10.uscourts.gov/special-master-142
<https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/florida-v-georgia-2/>
3. Link: Woodward Creek Water Management Plan
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/spy914tleklhvi9/Woodward%20Creek%20Watershed%20Management%20Plan%20%20Final%207-10-2020.pdf?dl=0>
4. Link: Water Resources Bibliography
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/0wz23zwlrwuegh9/Water%20Resources%20Bibliography%207-28-20.pdf?dl=0>
5. Link: Woodward Creek WMP and Bibliography also available on NGRC Website
<http://www.nwgrc.org/>
6. Link: Story map on GIS for PFOA and PFOS
<http://gaepd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e8f2c6a51c1c41088002350f1eabe598>

Coosa – North Georgia Water Planning Council, September 30, 2020

Council Members Present

1. Brooke Anderson
2. Mike Berg
3. Greg Bowman
4. Keith Coffey
5. Haynes Johnson
6. Lamar Paris
7. Gary McVey
8. Tom O'Bryant

Elected Officials

1. None in attendance.

Partnering & Other State Agencies

1. Jullianne Meadows, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
2. Gretchen Lugthart, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
3. Jennifer Flowers, Lake Lanier Association
4. Sarah Beddington, Big Cypress Consulting
5. Gregory Cherry, USGS
6. Alex Sullivan, Fieldale Farms
7. Steven Herbst, resident
8. Ritchie Mullen, Georgia Forestry Commission
9. Bob Endress, Wendall Companies
10. Christine McKay, US EPA
11. Mike Hackett, City of Rome Water and Sewer
12. Debbie Warner Gordon, USGS
13. Danny Johnson, MNGWPD

GA Environmental Protection Division

1. Liz Booth, GA EPD Program Manager
2. Christine Voudy, GA EPD Council Lead

Planning Contractors - Jacobs

1. Brian Skeens
2. Craig Hensley
3. Michelle Vincent

Planning Contractors - Black and Veatch

1. Stephen Simpson