



# Georgia Water Planning

## **Meeting Summary**

### **Upper Flint, Middle Chattahoochee and Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Regional Water Councils Joint Meeting**

**By Videoconference**

**February 23, 2021**

## **Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Overview**

Kristin Rowles (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center, or GWPPC) started the meeting by offering some logistical guidelines and checking who was in attendance. Meeting attendees are listed at end of the meeting summary. Council members Harold Fallin (Upper Flint), Eddie Freeman (Upper Flint), Ken Penuel (Middle Chattahoochee), and Dallas Jankowski (Middle Chattahoochee) were remembered for their contributions through a moment of silence.

## **Council Chair Comments**

Richard Royal (Chair, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee) welcomed the members and thanked all of them for their participation to date and reinforced the importance of planning for the future. Chairman Royal also noted the importance of completing the member appointment process.

Donald Chase (Chair, Upper Flint) also thanked members for their attendance and patience in dealing with the virtual format. He noted the importance of the work of the Councils.

Comments from Steve Davis (Chair, Middle Chattahoochee) were held until later in the meeting due to technical difficulties. He offered his appreciation for the participation of all the Council members. He thanked the presenters for today's meeting for sharing information and expressed interest in continuing to partner with neighboring Councils.

## **Update on Regional Water Planning Process**

Jennifer Welte (Georgia Environmental Protection Division, or GAEPD) acknowledged her colleagues from EPD, also on the call: Johanna Smith and Christine Voudy. Jennifer provided an update on Council appointments noting that the process is proceeding and that there was a recent appointment by the Speaker's office to a neighboring Council. Jennifer also provided an

update on the FL v. GA equitable apportionment case. The Court held oral arguments on Special Master Kelly's December 2019 recommendation on February 22. She noted that EPD Director Rick Dunn had commented to the DNR Board in a meeting earlier in the day that Georgia's legal team did a good job in presenting the case.

Jennifer next reminded the members on the planning schedule that will largely coincide with the Metro North Georgia Water District's planning process. She noted that Municipal, Industrial and Energy forecasts have been completed and the finalized municipal forecasts will be published soon. She acknowledged those representing the Councils on the committee that has been tracking forecast development: Brant Keller (Upper Flint), Steve Davis (Middle Chattahoochee), and Steve Sykes (Lower Flint-Ochlockonee). Agricultural water demand forecasts are being developed by the Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center, with support from UGA researchers, and completion is expected during the spring of 2021. Finally, Jennifer summarized refined modeling tools that will be used in the Resource Assessment process.

### **Seed Grant Implementation Project Presentations**

Kristin encouraged the Council members to listen to the seed grant project presentations for ideas to consider in their planning work and for future projects in the region.

***Innovative Ag Irrigation Scheduling Tools in the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee and Upper Flint Water Council Areas:*** Calvin Perry (UGA) gave an update on a seed grant project concerning advanced irrigation scheduling and irrigation sensor practices in counties located in the Upper and Lower Flint Councils. The project is almost complete. A website detailing project results and lessons learned is under development.

***Watershed Management Plan for Long Cane Creek (Middle Chattahoochee region):*** Laura Schneider (River Valley Regional Commission) provided an overview of this update to the watershed management plan for Long Cane Creek. The project conducted field work, stakeholder engagement, and plan development to address water quality impairments from bacterial and sediment sources. This project is almost complete, and the plan will soon be posted for public review.

***Pike County Plans for Future by Building on the Upper Flint Regional Water Plan (Upper Flint region):*** Ellen Bauske and Mussie Habteselassie (UGA Griffin) presented a summary of planned activities related to a recently funded seed grant project focused on developing a 30-year water resources plan for Pike County, GA. Several members and observers offered input on possible participants for the project advisory group.

**City of Thomasville Stormwater Data Collection and Assessment (Lower Flint-Ochlockonee region):** Pam Schalk (City of Thomasville) presented an overview of a new seed grant project that will support the City of Thomasville in the development of the first phase of a Stormwater Master Plan.

The presenters each explained which management practices and recommendations they addressed in the regional water plans. A Council member asked how we can expand the impact of these projects further in our regions and beyond. Kristin asked the Council members to consider addressing these activities in review and revision of the regional water plans to add more specificity to the management practices and to build on these projects with ideas for future seed grants and grants from other funding sources. She noted that it might be helpful to review, at a future meeting, other funding sources for projects that can support activities that implement the regional water plans. Donald Chase noted that federal cost-share programs are a source of funding for agricultural best management practices and also noted that Quail Unlimited has cost-share programs for best management practices that might be applicable in these regions.

#### **Public Comment**

No one wished to make a public comment.

#### **Next Steps/Meeting Adjournment**

Kristin reminded members of the next steps for each Council, including demand forecasts to be presented at the next set of meetings. She also encouraged members to continue to identify opportunities for outreach and education about the Councils, and she noted the success of a recent outreach presentation by videoconference to the River Valley Regional Commission. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

**Council Members Attending February 23, 2021 Joint Meeting**

***Lower Flint-Ochlockonee***

Richard Royal, Chair  
Jimmy Webb, Vice Chair  
Lucius Adkins  
Steve Bailey  
Casey Cox  
Jimmy Champion  
John Heath  
Connie Hobbs  
Hank Jester  
George McIntosh  
Mike Newberry  
Calvin Perry  
Jim Quinn

***Upper Flint***

Donald Chase, Chair  
Raines Jordan, Vice Chair  
Michael Bowens  
Gene Brunson  
Beth English  
Jack Holbrook  
Brant Keller  
Larry Smith  
Brian Upson  
Joel Wood

***Middle Chattahoochee***

Steve Davis, Chair  
Harry Lange, Vice Chair  
James Emery  
Bill Heath  
Matt Windom

***Other Attendees***

Rachel Andrews (Andrews Drilling Co.)  
John Asbell (GA Power)  
Ellen Bauske (UGA Griffin)  
Deborah Bell (Spalding County)  
Dan Calhoun (USGS)  
Nealie Cannington (International Paper)  
Amanda Carroll (GEFA)  
Gail Cowie (GWPPC)  
Bert Early (GA Forestry Commission)  
Ben Emanuel (American Rivers)

Robert Farris (GA Forestry Foundation)  
Steve Golladay (Jones Center at Ichauway)  
Mussie Habteselassie (UGA Griffin)  
Danny Johnson (Metro Water District)  
Pavielle Ludlow (Three Rivers Regional Commission)  
Chris Manganiello (Chattahoochee Riverkeeper)  
Mark Masters (GWPPC)  
Paul McDaniel (GA Forestry Commission)  
Jimmie Montgomery (City of Thomasville)

Regina Nasrallah (GWPPC)

Tony Owens (International Paper)

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC)

Pam Schalk (City of Thomasville)

Laura Schneider (River Valley Regional  
Commission)

Steve Simpson (Black & Veatch)

Johanna Smith (GAEPD)

Steve Sykes (City of Camilla)

Scott Thackston (GA Forestry Commission)

Billy Turner (Tri Rivers Waterway  
Development Council)

Christine Voudy (GAEPD)

Debbie Warner Gordon (USGS)

Jennifer Welte (GAEPD)

Nicole Wien (Black & Veatch)

Stephanie Whitacre (Black & Veatch)