



## **Meeting Summary**

### **Upper Flint Regional Water Council Meeting**

**Flint Energies – Reynolds, GA**

**May 13, 2022**

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) welcomed the Council members, reviewed the agenda, and introduced the Council support team. Meeting materials are posted on the Council website.

#### **Chair's Report**

Chairman Chase thanked the organizers and members for attending and offered Beth English the Council's condolences.

#### **Resources Assessment**

##### *Surface Water Availability*

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) introduced the Resources Assessment topic by going over the three water planning models: 1. Groundwater Availability (results presented at last meeting), 2. Surface Water Availability (results shared today), and 3. Surface Water Quality (results presented at last meeting and more results will be discussed today). She stated that metrics are used to evaluate the results relative to the outcomes of interest.

Wei Zeng (GAEPD) presented the surface water availability assessment results. He briefly introduced the Basin Environmental Assessment Model (BEAM) and described how BEAM will enhance surface water modeling. Wei emphasized how BEAM will allow a greater understanding and ability to look deeper into water resources within the basin by allowing every water resource facility (including withdrawals and discharges) to function as a node. Previously there were only around 20 nodes within the ACF basin. Next, Wei presented examples of how BEAM can be used to model water supply and wastewater assimilation challenges. The ACF-BEAM models baseline and future scenarios by setting a simulation period of known hydrologic conditions (1939-2018), a withdrawal and discharge amount baseline (average from 2010-2018, marginally dry), instream protection thresholds (per permit conditions), and using reservoir physical and operational data (from reservoir owner or EPD). For the Upper Flint region,

Wei analyzed two water supply challenges, including City of Warm Springs and Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute, a wastewater assimilation challenge for the City of Reynolds, and instream flow results at the Carsonville node. Wei concluded that there were moderate water supply and wastewater assimilation challenges under baseline water use conditions. A technical memorandum will be published with additional results as they become available and the Resource Assessment Team will provide updates and presentations to aid in explaining the results. For additional information, Wei's slides are available in the meeting materials.

Discussion summary:

- A Council member asked what would happen if there is an identified supply or wastewater challenge when a customer applies for a permit. Wei stated that for a water supply challenge, EPD would ask the customer to show a way to bridge the challenge, whether that be through developing a reservoir or interconnections with a neighbor. For a wastewater challenge, EPD would go to the proposed operation and list conditions to the permit, so there are no downstream impacts associated with the permit request.
- A Council member asked what the conditions in the NPDES permit are on the discharge side if there are challenges that arise. Wei stated that if the permit holder meets the limitations outlined in their permit, there is no permit violation, even if a water quality standard incursion occurs.
- A Council member asked about suspension of agricultural surface water withdrawals and noted that the Council member believes that the State of Alabama is encouraging additional irrigation. The information on irrigation in Alabama has not been confirmed.
- A Council member asked if there are active withdrawal permit applications in the Flint. Wei noted that there has not been a moratorium in the municipal or industrial side, but GA EPD can provide the number of active permit applications currently.
- A Council member asked how far downstream discharges are monitored and what the dissolved oxygen (DO) sag looks like out of Metro District. Wei answered that water quality is monitored downstream of discharges at the next water quality monitoring station. Liz Booth (GAEPD) has followed up on this topic after the meeting and stated that the predicted minimum DO concentration of 5.2 mg/L occurs around 53 miles downstream from the discharge, in the vicinity of Dog River.
- A Council member asked what the difference between the model simulations and reality are, specifically for Warm Springs, if there have been actual periods without water. Wei stated that there was a gap in the data for Warm Springs. He also stated that there are facilities in other Council regions that had challenges that match the model and verified the results. He also noted that impaired flow uses data from USDA, USACE, and EPD. Extensive model verification exists and is reported in the Modeling Report.

- Discussion about Carsonville flow results sparked questions over what should be used for the baseline in the model. Wei noted that any option chosen for a baseline has an effect and determines whether the model is based on more extreme drought conditions or not. Judgement was used to select the scenario to be considered the baseline; this selection affects the future conditions comparison as well. Wei stated that there can be multiple baselines in order to capture different conditions.

### *Water Quality*

Jennifer Welte (GAEPD) presented the water quality resource assessment results. Jennifer stated that the future conditions assessed are in the previous Plan under Section 5.3. She discussed the dissolved oxygen results under the updated future conditions for this plan update and described the conservative approach used to model results, including minimum instream flows and warm water temperatures. Jennifer discussed the Elkins Creek improvement. The City of Zebulon currently has no ammonia limit on their NPDES discharge permit. If ammonia is added to the permit, it will show the “exceeded” sections switching to “limited” in the future condition graphic. Jennifer noted that the watershed modeling update for nutrients associated with land use as well as discharges is underway but will be completed outside the timeframe of this plan update. The results from the previous planning cycle can be found in the Upper Flint Regional Water Plan and will continue to be used to inform water quality related management practices. For additional information, her slides are available in the meeting materials.

### **Management Practices Review**

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) introduced the Small Group Discussions for the Management Practices Review. Council members were asked to review the Management Practices divided into Water Quantity and Water Quality topics. Council members answered three main questions when reviewing the practices: 1. Which Management Practices are most important to you and why?

2. Are there any that should be added/removed?

3. Which management Practices need to be updated in Committee work?

Water Quantity had the following discussion points:

- DM1, DM2, SF1, SF2, SF3, SF5 practices need updating
- DM4, SF1, SF5 flagged for high priority

Water Quality had the following discussion points:

- WQ2, WQ3, WQ4, and WQ5 practices need updating
- WQ3 was flagged as highest priority and WQ2 and WQ5 were flagged as high priority

The discussions from the Water Quantity and Water Quality groups will be reflected in the revisions of the Management Practices section of the Plan and brought back to the Council for approval in committee meetings in June.

### **Plan Review Committee Report**

Gordon Rogers presented the Plan Review Committee Report. The Plan Review Committee held a meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to review draft sections 1, 2, and 4.

Major topics discussed included:

- Upstream's (Metro) influence on Upper Flint region
- Population projections
- Graphs and charts needed in section 4

The Council approved plan updates to section 1,2, and 4 as edited by the committee. Further edits to these sections are expected and any substantial edits will be reviewed by the committee/Council.

### **Inter-Council Coordination Committee**

Brant Keller delivered the Inter-Council Coordination Committee Report. The committee convened on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to discuss the Metro Water District Plan and provide recommendations on behalf of the Upper Flint Regional Water Planning Council. The committee drafted a comment letter to the MNGWPD including the following recommendations:

1. Need to work drought response and resiliency into the letter response to the Metro Planning District
2. ARC high level language: water recharge to the Flint (special committee), empty quarry in Griffin (supplied by reuse and river intake) and other opportunities.

Corinne noted that the next Inter-Council Committee meeting with the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee and Middle Chattahoochee Council will be held in June to review and update Section 7.4 Recommendations to the State: Coordinated Recommendations with Neighboring Councils. Brant Keller, Gordon Rogers, and Donald Chase will be the UFL InterCouncil Committee.

### **Recommendations Review**

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) discussed the Recommendations to the State, which is section 7.4 of the Plan. Currently the Recommendation section is comprised of Information Needs, Water Policy Recommendations, and Coordinated Recommendations with Neighboring Councils. Each Recommendation was discussed briefly and the Council members were asked to state whether they think anything needs updating or removal.

Council members had the following discussion points:

#### *Information Needs:*

- Points 8,9,10, 12, and 15 were flagged to remain
- Points 4, 5, and 14 were flagged for deletion
- Points 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 13 were flagged as needing updating in Committee work

#### *Water Policy Recommendations:*

- Stream buffer item was flagged for deletion
- Points 3, 7, and 8 were flagged as needing updating

### **Next Steps in Plan Review and Revisions**

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) presented the Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Schedule. The Plan Review Committee has completed its initial work and Water Quantity and Water Quality Committees will be formed to review related management practices. Both committees will be meeting, starting in June, to go over the revisions made to the Management Practices and Recommendations sections of the Plan. The Inter-Council Committee will also meet in June with the other Region's Council members.

The EPD target date of adoption of the revised Regional Water Plan is for December 2022.

### **EPD Report**

Johanna Smith (GAEPD) presented FY23 RWP Seed Grant Program, which provides funding for projects that implement Regional Water Plan management practices and recommendations. The application is on the Georgia Water Planning website and will be announced in July with a deadline in October. The program provides up to \$75,000 per project. Johanna emphasized that the Council should not feel limited by funding when putting items in the Plan because the Seed Grant Program can offer funding for such projects.

### **Information Items**

Steve Simpson (Black & Veatch) presented two information items: the GEFA Georgia Water Supply and Redundancy Study and the GEFA Biosolids report. Both reports are available on GEFA's website.

#### *GA Water Supply*

- Identify redundant water supply sources
- Evaluate potential projects that improve water reliability for public water systems
- Emergency supply and deficit under existing and future conditions
- Upper Flint Region has one 2015 deficit and three 2050 deficits
- Potential projects identified can assist Councils and systems in understanding the types of upgrades that could benefit the Water Planning Region

#### *GEFA Biosolids Report*

- Historical trend in Georgia has been increased landfilling over time. Recent slope failures have resulted in increased landfill regulation
- Trends for solid management include continuing challenges for all end uses of solids, including landfilling, land application, and incineration
- Available capacity for landfilling solids is limited and disposal cost is rising
- Alternative outlets/processes needed to address the challenges
- GEFA funding is available for biosolid projects

### **Next Steps**

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) concluded by mentioning the next Council meeting will take place on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, where the Council will consider a Draft Plan for Review following the Committee work taking place this summer.

**Adjourn**

Chairman Chase adjourned by thanking the Council members for attending the meeting and noted that the Council and support team has plenty of work to do before the next meeting.

**Council Members Attending May 13, 2022 Meeting**

Michael Bowens\*

Donald Chase

Adam Graft

Rodney Hilley\*

Jack Holbrook

Raines Jordan\*

Brant Keller

Lamar Perlis

Gordon Rogers

Butch Turner

Teel Warbington

Joel Wood

**Other Attendees**

Jake Dean (B&V)

Bert Earley (GA Forestry Commission)

Ben Emanuel (American Rivers)

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC)

Laura Schneider (River Valley Regional Commission)

Steve Simpson (B&V)

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC)

Corinne Valentine (B&V)

Jennifer Welte (GAEPD)

Johanna Smith (GAEPD)

Wei Zeng (GAEPD)

*\*By videoconference*