



Meeting Summary

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Council

Meeting Columbus Water Works Service Center

Columbus, GA May 11th, 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 Davis thanked the Council committees for the work accomplished thus far. He reminded the Council that updates to the Regional Plan are due soon and emphasized the importance of completing the plans with quality information that represents the region. Christine Voudy and Wei Zeng (GAEPD) volunteered to support the plan update committee and answer any questions that come up concerning the material.

Resource Assessment Results

Surface Water Availability

Dr. Wei Zeng (GAEPD) presented the surface water availability assessment results. He 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 Middle Chattahoochee region, Wei analyzed three water supply challenges including Carroll County Water Authority, Heard County Water Authority, and PVA Water Association, Inc., two wastewater assimilation challenges, and results demonstrating West Point Lake elevation and Chattahoochee River flow at Columbus results. 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 noted there were less USGS flow gauging stations in 1930 and Wei noted that many monitoring locations have been added within the last 40 years.
- A Council member asked what the difference between the average and worst-case scenario would be. Wei answered that using the average from 2010-2018 as the baseline represents marginally dry conditions. This approach is conservative but does not reflect extreme water usage peaks.
- A Council member asked how the instream protection thresholds are determined. Wei noted that there are three options on how to permit, including: 1. Site specific needs of a stream, 2. Monthly 7Q10 (7-day average flow that statistically occurs once every 10 years), or 3. Some percentage of annual average flow must be maintained.
- A Council member asked if the model can be used to determine how much storage is needed to minimize risk. Wei advised that yes, a theoretical reservoir can be modeled to estimate the storage volume needed to eliminate water supply challenges.
- A Council member asked how often do we see shortages as presented in the results and what storage is needed to mitigate? Wei noted that additional storage capacity and reduced demand/conservation can help.
- A Council member asked if it would be possible to determine windows of best flows for recreational uses such as kayaking. A council member noted that a peak flow of ~9000 cfs is needed to create standing wave conditions. Wei noted that it would be possible, but hourly flow estimate results to investigate recreational use is a more detailed scope and not currently in the modeling program. The model does provide daily flow estimates and how flows may be altered.
- Council members asked about winter pool elevations at West Point. Wei advised that GA EPD commented on flood control in comments to the USACE on the Water Control Manual, suggesting that forecasting inflow to inform flood control strategy could allow

the same level of flood protection and higher winter pool elevations.

- Council members discussed flow at Columbus; flows of 1350 cfs are achieved 92-93% of the time under the modeled conditions. A Council member noted that GA Power uses a 3-day average to calculate releases, but issues can be experienced on holiday weekends.
- Wei also noted that the model can give flows, but flow is not the only criteria for meeting navigation. The USACE Water Control manual operation conditions are incorporated in the BEAM model.

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. Dissolved oxygen modeling for future conditions is generally improved due to assumed more stringent permit conditions where discharges increase. 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 Middle Chattahoochee 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:

- WW-2, WS-1, WS-2, WS-3, WS-6 practices need updating
- WS-4 considered high priority

Water Quality had the following discussion points:

- WQ-1, WQ-2, WQ-3, WQ-5, and WQ-6 practices need updating
- WQ-1, WQ-2, and WQ-5 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

Chairman Davis presented the Plan Review Committee Report. The Plan Review Committee held a meeting on May 6th, 2022 to review draft sections 1, 2, and 4.

Major topics discussed include:

- Water Control Manual Update – Since the last plan update, the USACE updated the Water Control Manual and this should be reflected in the plan
- Population Projections – The Council discussed the concern with the population projections developed by OPB specifically for Muscogee County. Council members have begun investigating potential alternate population projections to document in the plan.

The Council reviewed 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.

Following discussion, Harry Lange made a motion to approve the Plan Review Committee report, seconded by Victoria Barrett. The motion was approved by consensus.

Inter-Council Coordination Committee

Patrick Bowie delivered the Inter-Council Coordination Committee Report. The committee convened on May 4th, 2022 to discuss the Metro Water District Plan and provide recommendations on behalf of the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Planning Council. The committee drafted a comment letter including the following recommendations:

1. Support the Council’s recommendation for assessment of modification of the rule curves for West Point Lake and Lake Lanier to increase system storage and improve operations for all uses.
2. Advocate for expanded regional water storage capacity to improve water resource management.
3. Support the collection and use of better field data for nutrient modeling
4. Encourage policies for rural development to use centralized treatment and point source discharge.

Following a motion by Matt Windom and a second by Harry Lange, the comment letter to Metro Water District was approved by consensus. The next Inter-Council Committee meeting with the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee and Upper Flint Council will be held in June to review and update Section 7.4 Recommendations to the State: Coordinated Recommendations with Neighboring Councils.

Recommendation Review

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) discussed the Recommendations to the State, which is section 7.4 of the Plan. Currently there are 12 recommendations and there may be opportunities to condense with some of the Management Practices. 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:

- Recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9 were flagged for review under Committee work

The edits discussed at today's meeting will be revised into the Plan and brought back to the Council in committee meetings in June for approval.

The Council also discussed how Alabama's water uses were modeled. Wei advised that data used in the USACE Res-Sim model for Alabama water use was utilized for the BEAM modeling, and the approach is to assume a 15% increase in the uses in the future horizon modeling.

Next Steps in Plan Review and Revisions

Corinne Valentine (Black & Veatch) 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. 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

Christine Voudy (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. Christine also mentioned points are given if multiple Council's work together to propose a project that will benefit multiple regions.

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
- Middle Chattahoochee Region has three 2015 deficits and five 2050 deficits
- Potential projects identified can assist Councils and systems in understanding the types of upgrades that could benefit the Water Planning Region

Discussion Summary:

- A Council member asked what type of sources were used in the study. Greg Horstmeir noted that the study used public data and survey responses, as well as the 2017 Council reports, along with professional judgement to form the results in this study.
- A council member asked about the most significant cause of deficits. Steve noted that the most common failure scenarios involve power supply loss.

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 23rd, 2022, where we will present a Draft Plan for Review following the Committee work taking place this summer.

Adjourn

Chairman Davis thanked the Council members and Team for attending today's meeting and adjourned.

Council Members Attending May 11, 2022 Meeting

Hannah Anderson*	Steve Davis
John Asbell*	James Emery
Victoria Barrett	Jimmy Hayes
Laura Lee Bernstein	Harry Lange
Patrick Bowie	Ed Moon

Matt Windom

Other Attendees

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC)

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC)

Mark Masters (GWPPC)

Steve Simpson (B&V)

Corinne Valentine (B&V)

Jake Dean (B&V)

Elizabeth Booth (GAEPD)*

Wei Zeng (GAEPD)

Christine Voudy (GAEPD)

Jennifer Welte (GAEPD)

Amanda Carroll (GEFA)*

Paul McDaniel (GA. Forestry Commission)*

Danny Johnson (MNGWPD)

Russell Rhodes (UGOCCC)

Billy Turner (CWW Retired)

Caleb Cole (CWW)

Laura Schneider (RVRC)

Chris Mangianello (Chattahoochee
Riverkeeper)

Dawson Lugian (Georgia Power)

Greg Horstmeier (Wood)*

**By videoconference*

*Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Council
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