



Upper Flint Regional Water Council

Flint Energy Conference Room, Reynolds, GA

August 24, 2022

Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Chase opened the meeting with an introduction and welcome, thanking members for attending and asking Council members to keep Brant Keller in their prayers.

Mark Masters (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 noted he had no additional comments.

New Planning Timeline

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC) updated members with the new Regional Water Plan (RWP) review and revision schedule. The new EPD targeted date of adoption of revised RWP is set for June 2023. This is a six-month extension that was approved by EPD to provide additional time for surface water availability modeling, for incorporating the Metro District's forecasting projections into the water quality and surface water models, and for the ongoing Council member appointment process. There are currently three more Council meetings scheduled after today's meeting and the Council plans to continue work in their sub-committees between the meetings as well.

Summary from last meeting

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) discussed a summary from the past meeting. She reminded members that they reviewed resource assessment results, discussed management practices and recommendations to the state, considered recommendations from the committees, and learned about recent studies on water system interconnectivity and biosolids management.

EPD Update, Seed Grants

Johanna Smith (GAEPD) led the discussion on EPD updates and Seed Grants. She informed the members that the Seed Grant Program was announced on July 7th and will close for applications October 15. Seed Grants are available for funding projects that support Regional Water Plan management and practices/recommendations related to water quality with up to \$75,000 in state funding available (per project). She also noted that in the Upper Flint region, \$176,000 of state funds have been awarded towards 3 total seed grant projects. Funding opportunities are available on the Georgia Water Planning website. She also mentioned that Pike County has a current seed grant underway from FY 2021.

Johanna then discussed the Kiwanis Club in Americus, where she presented on EPD and Regional Water Planning for outreach, overview, and education. A Council member, Adam Graft, also attended the meeting. Other members are encouraged to continue outreach efforts. Adam shared that it went really well and those attendees showed interest and excitement in the materials presented by Johanna on the RWP.

Orientation to goals for afternoon group discussions

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) introduced goals and questions to the Council members to keep in mind as the meeting progressed. She asked members to consider any new issues not yet reflected in the recommendations, what else they want to know about water availability, what water-related projects they would like to prioritize over the next 5 years, and to think of any unsettled committee items.

Surface Water Availability Assessment Results

Mark Masters (GWPPC) started by sharing an update on the ARPA grant project for converting surface water irrigators to deeper aquifer wells. He noted that the team has assessed sites from monitoring wells, updated a farmers application website, and plans to form a stakeholder advisory group.

Mark then presented, with Wei Zeng (GAEPD), the Surface Water Availability Assessment results. Mark covered the water supply and wastewater assimilation challenges that were identified for the Upper Flint region and flow levels at the Carsonville flow gage. The model simulation included a wide range of hydrologic conditions utilizing data from the period between 1939-2018. The withdrawal and discharges for the model had four different scenarios: baseline (average water and wastewater demands for 2010-2018), baseline drought (2011 demands), forecast – ag constant (2060 demands, but agriculture held constant at Baseline), and forecast – ag growth (2060 demands, but with agriculture 2060 forecast without moratorium). The instream flow and protection thresholds were modeled per permit conditions and reservoir physical and operational data were from reservoir owners or GAEPD.

Water and wastewater facilities analyzed in the UF region indicated 7 water supply challenges and 11 wastewater assimilation challenges. These challenges were identified as moderate under baseline and future water use conditions. Additional information on specific challenges are available in Wei's slides in the meeting materials.

Discussion Summary:

- A Council member asked what the difference is between a reservoir and a routing reservoir in the BEAM model? Wei stated that routing reservoirs are modeling mechanisms to simulate storage and attenuation of peak flow by river channels. Sometimes such attenuation is substantial enough to require individual routing mechanisms to simulate it.
- A Council member asked what is a wastewater discharge demand? Mark answered that the model results show the amount of water needed in stream to meet the 7Q10 flow that EPD uses to establish discharge permit limits to avoid water quality issues.
- A Council member asked if we are accounting for returns in the model? Mark answered yes, we are accounting for discharge as inflows at nodes in the model.
- A Council member asked if the demand is saturated and what goes into Forecast – agriculture growth? Mark stated that the ag growth scenario is what is forecast to occur without the current moratorium policy.
- A Council member asked what would need to happen for the moratorium to end? Mark stated that the ARPA source conversion project has the possibility to change the moratorium in the future. The Habitat Conservation Plan that will be created by the project has the goal of using deeper aquifer wells to minimize withdrawals that impact surface flows to minimize harm to protected species like mussels. He also noted that the current moratorium shouldn't be viewed as a one size fits all policy for the entire ACF basin.
- A Council member stated that we have already made great strides in agricultural water conservation with technologies, like using GMO varieties of crops that require less water, and that we will continue to make a difference.
- A Council member asked why would a challenge decrease from Baseline to Baseline Drought? Mark explained that Baseline was the average use and Baseline Drought was the use during the drought from 2011 and some people cut back their water use during the drought.
- A Council member was concerned about the calibration because the model results are not matching what actually happened during those years. They asked to show the actual data plotted on the same simulation as the model for a comparison. Wei stated the

following information of the verification process for the results:

On verification (not calibration), we have compared simulated flows to observations at various locations. This verification will be included in the modeling report and will be provided to the council. It is not called a calibration because there are no parameters whose values need to be adjusted through the calibration process.

Also note that the verification process can only apply to a historical water demand scenario, which is not the same as any of the simulated scenarios.

The historical demand set has the recorded demand that changed over time. The simulated scenarios, on the other hand, have one fixed set of demand that is applied in every one of the years simulated.

One form of rough verification can be the following: our simulated current demand (2011) has 129 days of Carsonville flow lower than 100 cfs for the period of record while the observations have 103 such days in the 2011-2012 timeframe. Not an exact verification, but it gives confidence in the model and its input.

- A Council member noted Byromville's discharge is at levels of concern and asked what are the repercussions? It was answered that the permit may be revised to require more stringent limits. The Council also suggested reaching out to this municipality to share the results.

A Council member asked what the significance of 100 cfs and 600 cfs flows signify at the Carsonville node? A Council member answered that 100 cfs can be thought of as a level protective of minimum flow needed for animal habitat. The 600 cfs is a recreational navigation minimum requirement to protect canoeing and kayaking

Small Group Discussion: Surface Water Availability Assessment

The Council was split into two small groups to discuss the following topics after the presentation of the surface water availability assessment results. The discussions of the groups are presented in the "Full group discussion and report back" section of this summary.

- What are your primary takeaways from the water availability assessment?
 - What implications do they have for you?
- Are there any new issues not yet reflected in the recommendations?
 - Do the results mesh with the revised plan recommendations?
- What else do you want to know about water availability?
 - Are there other metrics that you would like to see?

- If you had sufficient funds, what water-related projects would you prioritize over the next 5 years?
- Discuss any unsettled committee items.

Water Quantity Committee report on revised recommendations

Raines Jordan presented the Water Quantity report from their June 14th and July 25th meetings. He discussed the changes in language the committee decided on for Management Practices DM1, DM4, DM5, SF1, SF2, SF3, and SF4. The Council had additional edits during the presentation for SF4's Management Practice to state "Encourage greater utilization of new or existing farm ponds in the Upper Flint Water Planning Region.", and to clarify that the intent was to fill farm ponds. Johanna also clarified during Council discussion that the only way the state will issue a withdrawal permit is for waters of the state. A farm pond located only on a single property is not a water of the state and does not require a withdrawal permit. Raines also went over edits to the Recommendations to the State for IN-4, IN-5, IN-7, IN-8, IN-9, IN-10, and IN-12. Council agreed with the newly added IN-8, which aims to conduct a dynamic analysis to assess how conservation can optimize use of reservoir storage. The Council discussed IN-12 and the inter-basin transfer of water withdrawn from the Flint River to the City of Griffin's reservoir, then sold to Coweta County, and discharged as treated wastewater into the Chattahoochee River. There was concern over the term "evaluate" in the IN-12 and the possibility to replace with a stronger action word.

Water Quality Committee report on revised recommendations

Beth English presented the Water Quality report. She shared with the council the recommendations on draft edits/updates made to the Management Practices and Recommendations to the State in Section 6 from the subcommittee meeting held on June 22, 2022. She discussed the changes made in language the committee decided on for Management Practices WQ2, WQ3, and WQ5. She also discussed the edits to the Recommendations to the State for WP-7 and WP-8. The Council recommended deletion of these recommendations.

Inter-Council Coordination Committee report on revised joint recommendations

Donald Chase presented the ICC report. He shared with the council the recommendations on draft edits/updates made to the Inter-Council Coordination Recommendations to the State in Section 6 from the subcommittee meeting held on June 23, 2022 members from Middle Chattahoochee, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee, and Upper Flint. JT-1 and JT-3 were unedited, and there was a slight modification to the JT-2 to include "continue to" improve upon existing resource assessment modeling. JT-4 was added which included language on water quality and supporting the improved utilization of BMPs from nonpoint sources.

The Team shared that the LFO and MCH committees have requested that JT-3 (interstate

planning organization for the ACF system) be re-evaluated due to the term "management" within the recommendation. The UFL committee discussed the use of the term management within this recommendation. A follow-up ICC subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to discuss JT-3.

Full group discussion and report back

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) led the full group discussion after the small groups met and covered topics that needed the full Council's discussion and input.

Adam Graft reported for small discussion group 1:

- The need for more water storage options was discussed, specifically the need for smaller and more frequent storage locations throughout the State. Quarries were discussed as a possibility.
- Discussed the agricultural moratorium and the need to revisit every 5 years, to evaluate the opportunity to lift these restrictions.
- Recommendation of individual metering for residences. Team shared that the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2011 requires submetering for new development of multifamily developments. Do we incentivize landlords to retrofit existing facilities?
- Recommendation to reduce number and flow of wastewater to LAS instead of surface water flow. Do we have the number and flow of LAS in the Upper Flint Region?
 - Discussed a Seed Grant opportunity to evaluate the cost and benefits of converting the Tyson Wastewater LAS to a system that discharges potable, cleaned water back into the river.
- Wild hogs are a water quality issue which has been studied for 15 years. They can cause land destruction, affect wildlife, and add fecal coliform into the streams. Council recommends an eradication program rather than continued study.
- Sediment is problem from dirt roads. Golden Triangle Regional Commission is working this issue.
 - Seed grant opportunity in this area; Three Rivers Regional Commission can support a local government on dirt roads or other seed grant applications.

Raines Jordan reported for small discussion group 2:

- Concerns over storage (granite, quarry, and kaolin mines)
- Pandemic's effect on population increases in the country, and how this is reflected in the Regional Water Plan under the population projections.

- Data from 2019 does not reflect these increases. Update in 5 years will reflect these population increases.
- The Southeast may have more rain fall, and it is likely to come in heavier rain events with shorter time periods due to climate change.
 - Effects from flooding. Climate change could also result in more frequent or worse droughts.
- Metrics: Recommendation to focus on 600 cfs instead of 100 cfs in the Flint at Carsonville.

After break-out groups reported back, Courtney asked the Council for their input on Recommendations to the State WP-8 and JT-3. The Council discussed how they do not want a transboundary water management organization with authority. They decided on substituting the management language for a different term. The Council will meet with the ICC committee to discuss in further detail.

Public Comment

Laura Schneider with RVRC expressed interest in supporting any local government interested in applying for a seed grant. The pre-application is due October 15.

Next Steps in Plan Review and Revision

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC) informed the Council the next meeting will take place on December 2nd where they will go over Sections 3 & 5 of the Plan. Section 3 covers the Current Resource Assessment results, while Section 5 covers the Future Resource Assessment results. Before the next Council meeting, the Water Quantity committee plans to meet two more times, while the Water Quality and Inter-Council Coordination committee will meet once more. Meagan reminded the members to watch for emails to come discussing the dates for these committee meetings.

Adjourn

Chairman Chase asked if there were any further questions regarding the material covered today and thanked everyone for attending today before adjourning.

Council Members Attending August 24, 2022 Meeting

Barry Blount

Raines Jordan

Michael Bowens*

Lamar Perlis

Gene Brunson

Gordon Rogers

Donald Chase

Butch Turner

Brad Ellis

Joel Wood

Beth English

Jack Holbrook

Adam Graft

Teel Warbington

Terrell Hudson

Other Attendees

Mark Masters (GWPPC)

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC)

Steve Simpson (B&V)

Corinne Valentine (B&V)

Jake Dean (B&V)

Tyler Brack (GFC)

Laura Schneider (RVRC)

Johanna Smith (GAEPD)

Ben Emanuel (RVRC)*

**By videoconference*