



Meeting Summary

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Council

Columbus Water Works Service Center, Columbus, GA

December 1, 2022

Welcome & Introductions

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) welcomed the Council members and reviewed the agenda. She also discussed the importance of today's meeting in getting ready for finalizing the Plan during next year's Council meeting. Meeting materials are posted on the Council Website.

Chair's Report

Steve Davis thanked everyone for attending and encouraged Council engagement as the finalization of the Plan draws near. He also mentioned the Seed Grant submitted by the UGA Extension Service for the Middle Chattahoochee Region which relates to the Plan's goals surrounding community education on water quality. Clete Barton was introduced from GAEPD as a new team member for planning and programming for the Regional Water Plans.

Summary From Last Meeting

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) covered a summary from the last Council meeting. She recapped how the Council discussed Surface Water Availability Assessment results as well as revisions to the Management Practices and Recommendations. The Council also considered revisions to recommendations from the Water Quantity, Water Quality, and Inter-Council Coordination Committees.

Surface Water Quality Assessment Results

Steve Simpson (B&V) presented the Surface Water Quality Assessment results that have been discussed previously in prior Council Meetings as well as some new material. He discussed impaired Waters Identification (303b/303d) list, Dissolved Oxygen Modeling (Assimilative Capacity), and Watershed Modeling. The impaired stream segments map has been updated with 2022 data and includes total river miles impaired by DO, Fecal Coliform, Metals, and Other impairments in the MCH region. The DO Modeling (Assimilative Capacity) results were

presented in terms of 2020 conditions as well as future 2060 conditions. The total stream miles for Assimilative Capacity were also presented. The watershed modeling updates are underway and will not be completely updated until after the 2023 Plan is adopted. Because of this, the plan will include watershed modeling results from the modeling completed in 2017.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked if the Impaired Streams Map (303b/303d) could display the specific streams impaired by DO, Fecal Coliform, and Metal classifications from the stream miles tables. Steve noted that information on the specific streams and details of impairments are on the GA EPD website.

A Council member asked what is driving the improvements in DO modeling for future conditions (Assimilative Capacity). Steve answered that point source permit limits will be adjusted by GA EPD during permit reissuance to address water quality exceedances as needed.

A Council member noted it would be useful to compare 2017, current, and future DO map results.

A Council member asked what are the sources of greater nutrient loading in the watershed modeling in the dry season, specifically in Harris County. It was answered that the wastewater assimilation challenges in that area were Pine Mountain, Callaway Gardens, and Koch Foods.

A Council member asked if there has been determined an ideal standard of Chlorophyll-a. Steve answered that the standards vary based on the watershed and are not set at the same levels for various lakes.

A Council member asked how often water testing is done on the lakes for nutrient loads. Clete Barton (GAEPD) answered they test the water once a month from April to October (during the growing season).

A Council member asked why the nutrient level for Lake Lanier's total phosphorus decreases when going from current non-point sources to current non-point sources and point sources combined. Steve answered we can ask the modelers more about this decrease.

A Council member noted a decrease in DO after Walter F. George Reservoir, which in the past was reflective of the Corp of Engineers not running or maintaining the aerators in the reservoir.

Water Quality Committee Report

Corinne Valentine (B&V) presented the Water Quality Report. She provided the Council with an overview of the recommended Water Quality updates to Sections 3 and 5. The language in both sections was updated to include the updated DO Modeling – Assimilative Capacity (river model) that was presented to the Council earlier this year. Nutrient modeling (lake and watershed) has not been updated since the last report. The 303(d) list is updated in section 3

with 2022 data.

Tallapoosa Surface Water Quantity Assessment Results, Alternative Population Scenario and Follow-up on West Point Results

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) and Wei Zeng (GAEPD) presented the Tallapoosa Surface Water Quality Assessment Results as well as the alternative population scenario model and any follow-up from the West Point Results on lake elevations.

There were questions at the last Council meeting about the West Point simulated elevations being different from historical observations. Wei addressed this question in Water Quantity Committee meetings and attributed it to three reasons: differences in Corps historical operations having evolved over time when the simulation was on a fixed set of operation rules, Corps operation discretion and operational imprecision in practice, and lastly, water demand differences between historical observation and simulated scenarios. EPD also shared results from model verification that showed consistency.

Harris and Muscogee developed alternative population scenarios to obtain water withdrawal projections and the wastewater discharge projections for these two counties. The BEAM modeling results from these alternative scenarios will be included in the Plan for reference. A Council member noted that they feel these results are more accurate with the updated population projections.

Tallapoosa Surface Water Quantity Assessment showed two water withdrawal facility challenges (all municipal) and six wastewater discharge challenges (all municipal). There were only three scenarios run in the ACT settings, which differs from the four used in the ACF Beam model scenario settings. The three scenarios are Baseline (Average water and wastewater demands for 2010-2018), Baseline Drought (2011 demands), and Forecast (2060 demands with agriculture 2060 forecast).

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked what storage is needed for Haralson County. Wei answered that while the BEAM model provides a shortfall estimate, a more detailed modeling effort is needed to determine actual storage needs.

A Council member asked what plant is causing the City of Villa Rica wastewater challenge. Kristin answered we can look into this and provide the facility name.

A Council member asked if lake levels can be evaluated on a non-Corps lake? Wei answered that yes, lake levels can be evaluated but that model assumptions are needed where operational data is not available.

Forecast Dashboard Update

Corinne Valentine (B&V) presented a brief introduction on accessing the Forecast Dashboard on the GA Water Planning website. The dashboard was developed as an interactive display of the forecast results. The brief demonstration showed how information can be selected by region, county, usage, demand, year.

EPD Update

Kelli-Ann Schrage (GAEPD) presented EPD update and announced the EPD received eight applications for Seed Grant proposals. They are putting together a committee to select the specific projects for funding, and that likely four of those projects will be funded. Further updates about Seed Grants will be announced soon, likely in January.

Water Quantity Committee Report

Patrick Bowie provided the Council with an overview of the recommended Water Quantity updates to Section 3 and 5. The Committee had discussed the following key changes to the Surface Water Availability of Section 3: added discussion about BEAM assessment and results, clarified text for reservoir operations, revised figures for USGS estimates, and updated flow results at Columbus to 1850 cfs (7-day average). The following changes were discussed for the Groundwater Availability of Section 3: consolidated figures and tables, added new assessment results, and refined discussions about how EPD estimates sustainable yield. For Section 5, integrated BEAM assessment results for 2060 were added to the Surface Water Availability portion. Lastly, for the Groundwater Demand of Section 5 a discussion of the GA-FIT program and a discussion of sustainable yield for the Claiborne aquifer was added.

Inter-Council Coordination Committee Report

Ken Van Horn presented the Inter-Council Coordination report from October 12th, where they discussed removing Joint Recommendation JT-3 from the update Plan. The Committee felt it was not a priority recommendation to the State during the time of the meeting.

Discussion Summary:

Based on Council discussion they decided to look at some variations in language for JT-3 in order to include the recommendation in the Plan with altered text.

The Council made a movement to recommend the new following text to the Plan and recommend review by the LFO and UFL Water Planning Region.

JT-3: The Councils recommend proactive engagement among Georgia, Alabama, and Florida to collaborate on opportunities to improve planning for shared water resources in the ACF Basin.

Small Group Discussions

Water Quantity

The Committee decided to elevate the language in Section 3 about the navigation that should be maintained between Columbus and Apalachicola Bay to a Recommendation to the State in Section 6.

Water Quality

The Water Quality Committee discussed the data and information presented in the Water Quality presentation by Steve Simpson.

The committee requested that additional information be provided with the 303(d) maps. Steve noted that an interactive impaired water listing can be accessed on the EPD website. It was agreed that the following links will be included within Section 3: Water Quality Story Map, GOMAS, and Georgia EPD 303(d) data. The committee also discussed how standards in lakes are determined. Clete and Kelli-Ann shared that the process to get rules changed in the lakes is a long process and then is submitted to EPA for approval and is not guaranteed to be approved by EPA.

The Committee decided to add references to GOMAS in Section 3 for the 303(d) maps and add links to GAEPD's website for a story map. The Committee discussed a need for better ways to account for phosphorus sources and the need to revisit established standards for Chlorophyll a for reservoirs. Language for doing this is already integrated within the plans. It was noted that the limits vary between reservoirs in the Chattahoochee system and members questioned the reasons for the differences. Members discussed a need for balancing the water quality standards needed for cost-effective water treatment and other goals such as productive fishing. The group also discussed the need to celebrate previous achievements and to encourage broader engagement with water quality challenges in the planning region.

Next Steps in Plan Review and Revision

Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC) went over the next steps for the Council between now and the next Council meeting, which will take place on March 16th, 2023. There will be one more additional Water Quantity Committee meeting. Also, the Council will receive the full Plan to read over and suggest any final comments before the next meeting. In March, the Council will discuss which Management Practices should be considered for High Priority and they will look over Section 7: implementation Schedule and Fiscal Implications.

It was discussed that the Joint Intercouncil recommendation regarding collaboration between the states would be discussed with the UFL and LFO Councils.

It was also noted that there will be an ACF Stakeholders meeting on March 1, 2023 in Eufala, AL, which will include a drought tabletop exercise led by the National Drought Mitigation

Center.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at the meeting.

Adjourn

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

Council Members Attending December 1, 2022 Meeting

Hannah Anderson*	Harry Lange
John Asbell*	Mac Moye
Laura Lee Bernstein	Kenneth Van Horn
Patrick Bowie	Matt Windom
Steve Davis	

Other Attendees

Mark Masters (GWPPC)
Kristin Rowles (GWPPC)
Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC)
Courtney Cooper (GWPPC)
Steve Simpson (B&V)
Corinne Valentine (B&V)
Jason Howard (B&V)
Wei Zeng (GAEPD)*
Clete Barton (GAEPD)
Kelli-Ann Schrage (GAEPD)
Chris Manganiello (Chattahoochee Riverkeeper)
Susan Mayberry*
Paul McDaniel (GA Forestry Commission)
Taylor McDaniel (UGA Extension)

**By videoconference*