



Meeting Summary

Upper Flint Regional Water Council

Flint Energy Conference Room, Reynolds, GA

December 2, 2022

Welcome & Introductions

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) welcomed the Council members and reviewed the agenda. She introduced a Seed Grant proposal that was submitted in the Upper Flint region that would be discussed later in the meeting. She also mentioned that there would be an additional presentation from Spalding County by Joseph Johnson and a former Council member, Dick Morrow. The Council welcomed a new member attending today, Brandon Lewis, as a nominee for the Council from the City of Griffin. Senator Ed Harbison also joined the meeting today and noted he was glad to be in today's attendance. Meeting materials are posted on the Council Website.

Mark Masters (GWPPC) discussed an update from the GA-FIT program. An advisory committee for GA-FIT has been formed and has met. The Drought SWAP program under GA-FIT is going to provide groundwater alternatives to surface water withdrawals in agricultural irrigation. He announced that the application period is currently open and will close on December 15, 2022. They will install monitoring wells for 16 landowners in the LFO and UF region that will provide a greater understanding of groundwater during the project. The auction project under GA-FIT will be kicking off again early next year and bidding will be open on February 20-24, 2023. Mark asked the Council that they continue to spread the word on these two projects.

Chair's Report

Chairman Chase opened the meeting with an introduction and welcome, thanking members for attending.

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 the 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 LFO 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 reflect the watershed modeling results from the modeling completed in 2017.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked what was included in the “Other” category on the Impaired Streams Maps. Steve answered that various components such as Biota (sediment), PCBs, and other chemicals are included. Another council member asked who sets the standards for the impaired stream list. Steve and Johanna responded that the standards are set by the State of Georgia. EPA requires that the state prepare a list of waters not currently meeting water quality criteria.

A Council member asked what the sampling schedule looks like in relation to the Stream Impairments Map. Clete Barton (GAEPD) answered that sampling takes place in streams across the state and an assessment is done based on multiple tests over a year period, once a month. Stream segments are rotated for annual sampling as well as prioritized by adjacent stream reaches. Another council member had a followup question whether sampling can be performed by a civic group. Clete responded that EPD will partner if the group will perform the correct qualifications for sampling. Steve advised that the criteria for sampling is posted on EPD’s website.

A council member asked how impaired waters of the Upper Flint basins compared to others in the State in terms of miles of impairment. Steve, Johanna, and Clete confirmed that Upper Flint was comparable to other regions.

The group discussed that some of the stream segments listed may be listed based on non-human influences, such as fecal coliform that could be attributed to animals rather than people. A council member shared that River Keepers is performing additional DNA fecal coliform sampling in Pigeon Creek to determine the source.

A Council member asked why some areas have higher nutrient loads in the watershed modeling maps and if there is topographical influence. Steve answered that nutrient loadings can be influenced by topography and the calibrated model should reflect increased loading where this occurs.

A Council member asked if Steve could explain what heat loads mean. Steve answered that it shows a gradation of nutrient contribution and “heat” refers to the intensity of the contribution.

A Council member asked if the 2050 projection of nitrogen and phosphorus between current and future in the modeling includes assumptions of more stringent regulations. Steve answered yes, there is an assumption that the State’s phosphorus strategy is implemented, which does include adding phosphorus limits in point source discharge permits, which is why comparing the current with future conditions in dry years do not show significant changes.

A Council member asked if nonpoint sources are from farming and if point sources are generally from factories. Steve answered yes, nonpoint sources can come from farmland or developed land, while point sources are generally industrial or municipal facilities.

A Council member asked if wild hogs are point or nonpoint source contributions. Steve answered that wildlife is considered a nonpoint source.

A Council member asked what causes the “hot spot” of nutrient loading in Muckalee Creek. Steve answered that we can look back in the modeling to analyze this.

Water Quality Committee Report

Barry Blount 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 Assimilative Capacity (river model) data that was updated and 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.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member noted the importance of including wild hogs as an impairment to water quality in Management Practices.

A council member asked about biosolids (both from municipal wastewater treatment facilities, as well biosolids from animal farming facilities). Steve responded that biosolids are actually reusable and renewable resources that can be utilized following proper treatment. A council member added that Griffin is implementing a dryer to produce Class A biosolids from its wastewater treatment plant solids.

Surface Water Quantity Assessment Results Update

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) and Wei Zeng (GWPPC) presented the Surface Water Quantity Assessment Results update. She announced that EPD is planning to reach out to the facilities identified as challenges from the resource assessment. She also brought up a discussion on Carsonville flows from previous meetings, where the Council asked EPD to answer questions concerning the discrepancy from unimpaired inflows being artificially high as a result of missing data on reservoir operations. Where there is missing data, assumptions had to be made and EPD has recently made improvements and adjustments to the data to better reflect flows at Carsonville. Better data on upstream flow management will also improve the model. Wei stated that they may visit facilities to obtain the necessary data as well.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member felt encouraged about the new calibrations to the model, as the results show greater consistency with observed data. Wei recognized the improved and suggested that EPD may need to make additional efforts to acquire historical operating data on the reservoirs.

Water Quantity Committee Report

Adam Graft 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: BEAM results and analysis were integrated, discussed assumptions about 100% consumptive use, and removed Buena Vista WPCP from Table 3-4 because it was determined to not be a challenge. The following changes were discussed for the Groundwater Availability of Section 3: consolidated figures & tables, added new assessment results, and refined discussion about how EPD estimates sustainable yield. For Section 5, a description of the GA-FIT program was added to the Groundwater Demand portion and text was revised on Claiborne results based on committee discussion.

Spalding County Sewer Feasibility Study

Joseph Johnson (Spalding County Water & Sewage Facilities Authority) presented the Spalding County Sewer Feasibility Study. They proposed four target areas for a plan to address septic issues in Spalding County by connecting to the City of Griffin system. The study is ongoing through August 2023.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked how they became aware of sewer issues in Spalding County. Joseph answered that they hear a lot from homeowner complaints from septic owners.

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 model of the forecast results from municipal, industrial, energy, and agricultural water use and discharge forecasts. The brief demonstration showed how information can be selected by region, county, usage, demand, year.

EPD Update

Johanna Smith (GAEPD) announced an update on the Seed Grant program. There was an application from the Upper Flint region to evaluate short-term and long-term drought management actions on the Flint River by the Upper Flint River Working Group, the University of Georgia-River Basin Center, and American Rivers. The Seed Grant Program received eight applications and will be funding four projects. There will be an internal review committee to make recommendations for funding decisions to the applicants. The selected projects should be announced in January. She also announced that Clete Barton, from GAEPD, will be working

with all of the Water Planning Regions.

Inter-Council Coordination Committee Report

Beth English provided the Council with an overview of the ICC meeting discussion held on 10/12/22 with council members from Lower Flint Ochlocknee, Middle Chattahoochee, and Lower Flint to discuss JT-3. JT-3 was a joint recommendation in the 2017 report that recommended the consideration of the creation of a coordinated, interstate planning organization for the ACF System. ICC did not attain consensus to include JT-3 as a joint recommendation to the state.

Discussion Summary:

Kristin Rowles (GWPPC) noted that the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Planning Council decided on alternative language to JT-3, to be proposed to Upper Flint and Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Regions as a Joint Recommendation. Upper Flint Council was presented with the new language for JT-3 and reached a consensus decision to incorporate the revised recommendation.

A Council member mentioned that they agree with the proposed language, but feel the US Army Corps of Engineers should be included in cooperation efforts.

Small Group Discussions

Water Quantity

The Committee decided to acknowledge the Spalding County Report in two places in the Plan, one as a new Management Practice to return water to the basin of origin, and second to add it to IN-12. They also wanted to emphasize GAEPD's IBT rules in the MP's recommending to decrease LAS; the team will propose some updated language for discussion at an additional Water Quantity Committee virtual meeting. They will be discussing water storage MP's and Recommendations to the State in the next committee meeting.

Water Quality

The committee discussed current issues with biosolids applications in agriculture and how producers remain aware of differences in the contents of different products. The committee discussed the potential for utilization of DNA testing in the streams to identify and target sources of fecal coliform. The Committee discussed the importance of limiting the impacts of pharmaceutical waste products on water supplies. Finally, the Committee noted continued concerns over the impacts of nuisance species, such as wild boar, on water quality. The Committee recommended changes to the management practices in WQ-2, WQ-3, and WQ-4. WQ-2 change was to add a bullet to encourage enhanced wildlife management. WQ-3 change was to support education on the proper disposal of pharmaceutical products. WQ-4 change was to encourage DNA studies to ensure that the source of contamination is known for streams listed as impaired.

Plenary Discussion of Plan Revisions

The Council decided to remove WP-7 from the Plan, and to delete WP-8 if the replacement JT-3 recommendation is added.

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 21st, 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.

Public Comment

There were no public comments made.

Adjourn

Chairman Chase thanked everyone for attending and encouraged the Council to bring any input and discussions about the Plan forward as the finalization of the Plan nears.

Council Members Attending December 2, 2022 Meeting

Barry Blount	Raines Jordan
Gene Brunson	Brandon Lewis
Donald Chase	Gordon Rogers
Beth English	Butch Turner
Adam Graft	Joel Wood
Jack Holbrook	Se. Ed Harbison
Terrell Hudson	

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)
Johanna Smith (GAEPD)
Clete Barton (GAEPD)
Wei Zeng*
Ben Emanuel (RVRC)
Joseph Johnson (City of Griffin)
Dick Morrow (City of Griffin)
John Joiner* (USGS)
Angelia Craig* (City of Cordele, Public Works)
Daniel Colhoun*

**By videoconference*