



Meeting Summary

Upper Flint Regional Water Council

Flint Energy Conference Room, Reynolds, GA

March 21, 2023

Welcome & Introductions

Steve Simpson (B&V) welcomed the Upper Flint (UF) Council members and members and attendees introduced themselves. Steve began the meeting by reviewing the agenda. Meeting materials are posted on the Council's website.

Chair's Report

Chairman Chase opened the meeting with an introduction and welcome, thanking members for attending. He noted that Lamar Perlis has stepped down from the Council and mentioned how he has been an integral part of the Council. Council members signed a thank-you card for Lamar.

Planning Timeline and Neighboring Council Coordination

Steve Simpson (B&V) covered a summary from the last Council meeting. He recapped how the Council discussed the Water Quality Assessment results. The Council also reviewed and discussed committee reports from Water Quality and Quantity. Lastly, they considered recommendations from the Inter-Council Coordination Committee. Steve also mentioned how the Project Team met with the Middle Ocmulgee & Suwannee-Satilla Councils to address any key Council issues and discussions that might cross Council boundaries. A facility in the Middle Ocmulgee Plan, Potato Creek in the City of Griffin, showed up as a non-substantial challenge, but we have mentioned it in our UF Plan since it is on the Flint River and concerns an important utility in the Upper Flint. He then noted that this will be our last meeting in this Planning cycle before the submission of the draft Regional Water Plan.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked if the City of Griffin wastewater challenge was in the Middle Ocmulgee region.

- Steve answered yes, it was added in the UF Plan because of the shared water resources, even though the facility is located in the Middle Ocmulgee Council region.

EPD Updates

Johanna Smith (GAEPD) presented information on the submittal of the Regional Water Plan draft and adoption process by the EPD Director. The Council is to submit the Draft Updated Plan to GAEPD by March 29th and GAEPD will advertise the draft plan by Public Notice on March 31st. The draft plan will have a 45-day public comment period that will end on May 15th. The Council will incorporate any changes the Council believes are needed based on the comments during their next meeting in June. After the last meeting in June, the Final Updated Plan should be submitted by June 23rd to GAEPD. Lastly, the EPD Director adopts the plan by June 30, 2023.

Johanna highlighted that GAPED is currently accepting applications for Section 319(h) Grant Funding. This funding is for projects that implement watershed management plans, address impaired waters and non-point source pollution, install Best Management Practices, engage in partnerships, collect water quality data, or result in measurable water quality improvements. Applications should be submitted by April 30, 2023.

Water Quantity Committee Report

Raines Jordan (Council Member) provided the Council with an overview of the recommended Water Quantity updates to Sections 6 – Management Practices and Recommendations to the State. The Committee had discussed the following key changes: adding the phrase “municipal and industrial LAS” in the Management Practice RM1, adding additional language to Recommendation to the State IN-12 about using information gathered from feasibility studies to support potential interventions to improve flows in the UF River Basin, and lastly they added a new Management Practice RM2 based on the prior Council meeting to encourage returning water back to the basin of origin.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member mentioned that evaluating the effects of both IN-12 (reversals of LAS and septic) and RM2 (reversals of IBT's) will be important to analyze in the future.

A Council member asked who has the responsibility and funding to conduct feasibility studies on additional storage capacities in the region.

- Johanna Smith (GAEPD) answered that the Council can make recommendations from their resource assessments and the GAEPD permitting process has to comply with the Plan. GAEPD does not decide where to place new storage options; it is ultimately up to the community to decide their needs. GAEPD would ask reservoir project proponents to evaluate their storage capacity and ensure that the needs are included in the Regional Water Plan. Inclusion in the Regional Water Plan will enable the state to consider

funding projects with loans.

A Council member mentioned that we may need a committee to address storage options in the future, such as a new reservoir in the region.

A Council member stated that we may need to have more meetings between now and the next 5-year plan to continue discussions and progress being made that implements components of the Plan.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for all their work done.

American Rivers' Seed Grant Update

Ben Emanuel (American Rivers) presented an update on the seed grant accepted in the UF region. Their seed grant will evaluate options for improving drought resilience in the Upper Flint. The seed grant is a collaboration between UGA and American Rivers Working Group. It will aim to achieve three objectives: (1) Predict ecological consequences of droughts of varying severity and duration, (2) Evaluate the potential for various drought response management actions to mitigate ecosystem effects at various drought severities. They will also look at potential management actions to be identified in collaboration with the Working Group and the Council, and lastly (3) Evaluate the potential for long-term management actions to increase drought resilience in the basin. The effects are to be evaluated using the BEAM model.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked how long the seed grant project will take place.

- Ben answered that the funding is set for 2-years. The project team is looking for input on management actions and metrics to evaluate. It would be valuable to the project team to attend a future council meeting (perhaps early next year) to report on progress, gather input, and set priorities for project completion.

ACFS Drought Exercise Report

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) summarized the ACF Stakeholders exercise that took place on March 1st in Eufaula, AL. The exercises ran through multiple drought scenarios to engage Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, as well as several Federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in discussions surrounding their drought management planning. ACF Stakeholders are aiming to repeat the exercise in 2024.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member mentioned that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers noted at the meeting that they can consider deviations from the Water Control Manual on the Chattahoochee River. He also said he is excited about the next exercise to take place, which may involve a closer look into regional scenarios.

Management Practice Prioritization Activity

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC) introduced the prioritization activity for the Management Practices. Council members were encouraged to list the three Management Practices they felt should be prioritized. Following the exercise, Council members discussed that **SF1, DM1, and WQ4** were selected as the Management Practices that had the most interest by members to be prioritized in the Plan.

Outstanding Planning Questions

Steve Simpson (B&V) covered the discussion of outstanding planning questions with the Council. He mentioned that the BEAM Model was recently updated by GAEPD and those updates have been reflected in the Plan draft. Changes from this update are seen in Table 3-4 and 5-2 in Sections 3 and 5 of the Plan. A new wastewater assimilation challenge, International Paper Company, was added to these tables, but this addition and the others challenges are not considered substantial. Steve then mentioned that Table 6.1 on Management Practices has changed in format since the last Council meeting. The table now includes details addressing responsible parties and implementation timeframes (short-term and long-term). The wastewater discharge challenges presented in Section 3 and 5 have also had formatting changes based on GAEPD input. The wastewater volume shortages have been removed from the tables and additional language has been included explaining a challenge is not considered substantial unless the percentage of time that the instream flow fell below the 7Q10 value is greater than 10%.

Discussion Summary:

A Council member asked where the Taylor City facility in the wastewater assimilation challenge is located.

- The facility is actually Taylor County; this edit will be corrected.

A Council member asked why the International Paper Company facility was not listed as a challenge previously.

- This was due to an error in coordinates in the BEAM Model, which has been fixed in the updated model run.

A Council member asked about Ellaville WPCP, which decreased in percentage of time below the 7Q10 from Baseline Drought Scenario to the Forecasted Ag growth Scenario.

- Steve noted that generally improvements in future scenarios are the result of changed flows upstream of the facility, as this affects the percentage of time the stream experiences 7Q10 flow conditions.

Public Comment

Laura Schneider from River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) noted that grant application and management services assistance can be provided by the Commission and encouraged folks to reach out with interest in potential projects.

Approval of the Draft Plan for Public Review

Chairman Chase made a motion to approve the draft plan. It was approved by consensus with no opposition.

Next Steps in Plan Review and Revision

Steve Simpson (B&V) announced that the next Council meeting will be held on June 9th, 2023, which will be the final meeting. We will be looking to incorporate comments from the Council input and public review during this meeting before the final plan is submitted for adoption by the EPD Director.

The group discussed potential location options for the next meeting. It was agreed that the Flint Energies facility in Reynolds has been a good, relatively central location for the Council meetings and would be a good choice for the June 9 meeting.

Adjourn

Chairman Chase thanked everyone for attending and advised that he looks forward to seeing everyone on June 9th.

Council Members Attending March 21, 2023 Meeting

Michael Bowens*	Raines Jordan
Gene Brunson	Gordon Rogers
Donald Chase	Butch Turner
Beth English	Teel Warbington
Jack Holbrook	Joel Wood*
Terrell Hudson	

Other Attendees

Courtney Cooper (GWPPC)
Meagan Szydzik (GWPPC)*

Steve Simpson (B&V)

Rob Bocarro (B&V)

Jason Howard (B&V)

Johanna Smith (GAEPD)

Ben Emanuel (American Rivers)

Laura Schneider (RVRC)

Madison Luke (UGA Extension)

Paul McDaniel (GFC)

**By videoconference*