

Middle Chattahoochee Council Meeting

June 16, 2023



**GEORGIA
WATER PLANNING**

waterplanning.georgia.gov

Agenda

Objectives:

Approve the Regional Water Plan for submission to GAEPD
Tour of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility at West Point Lake

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 9:45 am | Registration |
| 10:00 am | Welcome, Agenda Review – <i>Courtney Cooper, GWPPC</i> |
| 10:10 am | Chair’s Report – <i>Chairman Davis</i> |
| 10:20 am | EPD Report – <i>Kelli-Ann Schrage, GAEPD</i> |
| 10:30 am | Public Comment |
| 10:40 am | Regional Water Plan Review – <i>Meagan Szydzik, GWPPC</i> |
| 11:10 am | Introduction to Dam Facility and Overview of Tour – <i>Jay Jamison, US Army Corps of Engineers</i> |
| 11:40 am | Adjourn to lunch/travel to Hardley Creek Park |
| 12:00 pm | Lunch at Hardley Creek Park |
| 12:45 pm | Tour of Dam Facilities |



Introductions

STEVE DAVIS

Columbus Water Works

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Middle Chattahoochee Council Members

Name	City	County
Hannah V. Anderson	Fort Gaines	Clay
John M. Asbell	LaGrange	Troup
Victoria Barrett	Richland	Stewart
Laura Lee Bernstein	Columbus	Muscogee
Patrick Bowie	LaGrange	Troup
Jimmy Bradley	Cuthbert	Randolph
Barbie Crockett	Centralhatchee	Heard
Steve Davis, Chair	Columbus	Muscogee
Philip Eidson	Tallapoosa	Haralson
Tony Ellis	Tallapoosa	Haralson
James Emery	LaGrange	Troup
Gardiner Garrard	Columbus	Muscogee
Dan Gilbert	Columbus	Muscogee
Joseph Griffith	Buchanan	Haralson
Tim Grizzard	Franklin	Heard
Jimmie L. Hayes	Morris	Quitman
Senator Jason Anavitarte (Ex-Officio)		

Name	City	County
Kevin Hayes	Franklin	Heard
Bill Heath	Bremen	Haralson
Ken Johnson	Fort Gaines	Clay
Harry Lange	Cataula	Harris
Carvel Lewis	Georgetown	Quitman
Adolph McLendon	Richland	Stewart
George E. Moon III	West Point	Harris
Mac Moye	Lumpkin	Stewart
Denney Rogers	Ephesus	Heard
Jim Thornton	LaGrange	Troup
Kenneth M. Van Horn	Cusseta	Chattahoochee
Jason Weeks	Georgetown	Quitman
Don Watson (Alternate)	LaGrange	Troup
Matt Windom	Bowdon	Carroll
Robert York	Tallapoosa	Haralson
Representative Randy Nix (Ex-Officio)		



Chair's Report

Presented by Chairman Davis



EPD Report

Kelli-Ann Schrage, GA EPD





GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

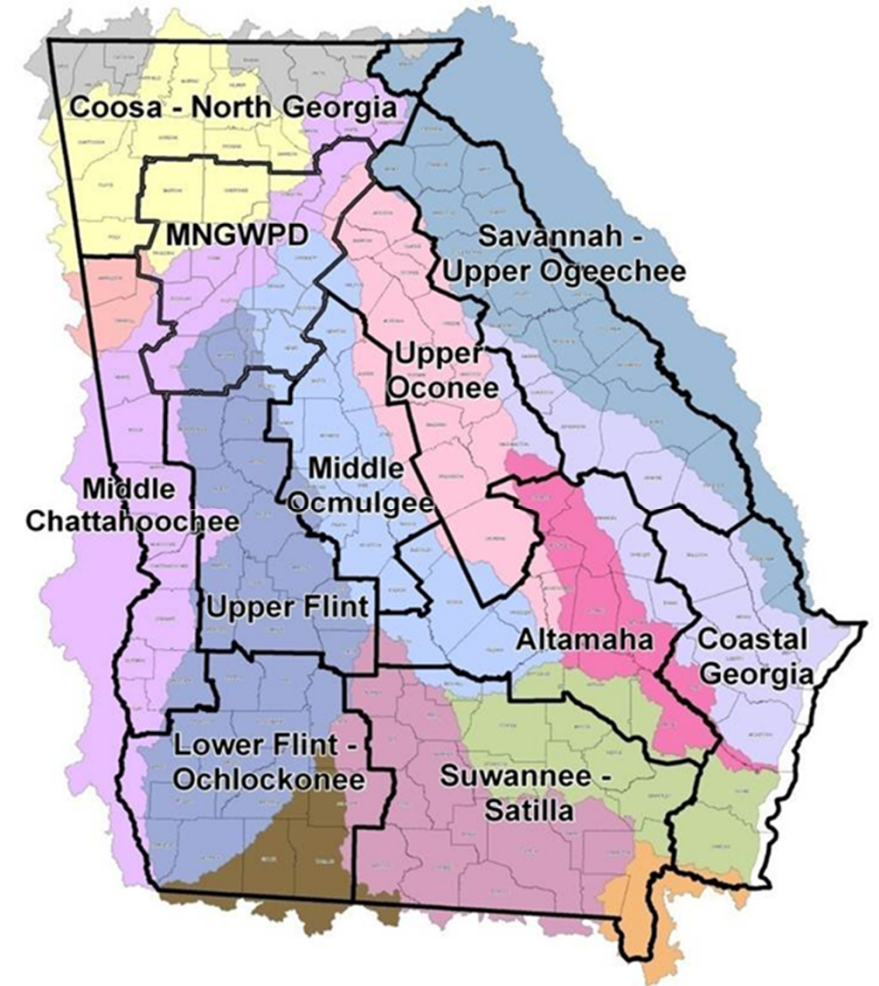
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

SFY2024 Regional Water Planning SEED GRANT

Watershed Protection Branch
Grants Unit

Regional Water Plan Seed Grant

- Up to \$75,000 per project to implement Regional Water Plans
- Cost-Share: 60% state funds/40% local match (10% of project total as cash)
- Letter of Support from Water Council
- Scheduling required pre-application meetings will be due in Mid October
- Accepting applications for SFY2024 until **October 31, 2023**
- **NEW for SFY2023:** Must apply using online Grant Application Portal



Online Application Instructions

- New for SFY2024
- All applications must be submitted through the RWP Seed Grant Application Portal
- 1. Create an Account
- 2. Create an Organization Profile
- 3. Complete Application Section 1: Project Description
- 4. Complete Application Section 2: Project Budget
- 5. **SUBMIT all sections and supporting attachments in the portal by **OCTOBER 31, 2023.****

To inquire about potential projects or to schedule a pre-application meeting, contact Joyce McClain at joyce.mcclain@dnr.ga.gov or 470-251-2761.

https://webportalapp.com/sp/gaepd_seedgrant



GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

Regional Water Planning Seed Grant > City of Happy | Trash Free Waters Education

Welcome, joyhinkle+5@gmail.com

Order by: Newest to Oldest

City of Happy | Trash Free Waters Education

RWP Seed Grant Application **Submit**

When both Project Description and Budget steps are complete, click 'Mark Complete' on each.
The page will refresh and the "Submit" button to the right will become green and clickable.
Click 'Submit'.

Application Section 1: Project Description **Complete** **Edit**
The blue button will update to reflect how you can interact with this step.

Application Section 2: Budget **Complete** **Edit**
The blue button will update to reflect how you can interact with this step.



Public Comment



Regional Water Plan Review

Meagan Szydzik



Comments Received on Draft MCH Regional Water Plan during Public Comment Period

- Chris Manganiello, Water Policy Director, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
- Peter Maholland, Georgia Ecological Services Office, USFWS
- Amy Rosemond, Distinguished Research Professor, Odum School of Ecology, UGA



Slide 12

KRO

Including this slide at beginning to set up the discussion and to acknowledge the commenters (in our remarks) for reviewing the plan and thanking them for their engagement in the process.

Kristin Rowles, 2023-05-26T17:21:54.224

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Comments May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<p><i>#1(a): Timing, Rule Curves and Probability-based Forecasts (Sections 3 and 6):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for Council's request to evaluate flows and lake levels under high and low flow conditions• Support for Council's recommendation for "real-time and probability-based forecasts" for West Point Lake and request that Council recommends the use of forecast informed reservoir operations for all reservoirs in Chattahoochee system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council could amend Management Practice IU-2 with a bullet point offering broader support for forecast informed reservoir operation: <p>"Support the evaluation and, as appropriate, adoption of forecast informed reservoir operations at all USACE reservoirs in the Chattahoochee River. Section 8303 of the Water Resources Development Act (2022) included a provision directing the Corps to assess the viability of FIRO in the ACF River basin."</p>	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Comments May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<p><i>#1(b): Columbus Whitewater Course (Section 3):</i> As the Council prepares recommendations for the 2028 Plan revision, the Council may consider evaluating the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process to secure “equal consideration” of recreational flow and other benefits during the Georgia Power Company’s renewal of the North Highland, Oliver and Goat Rock license (Middle Chattahoochee Project, P-2177), which expires in 2034.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council could invite presentations to develop understanding of the FERC re-licensing for these dams and how their management might affect recreational opportunities.• No change in plan.	



Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Comments May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<p>#6(a): Assuming the municipal demand will not increase and given the trends identified in the Draft Plan, the Draft Plan is surprising for including Water Management Practices that encourage development of new water storage and reservoirs (see page 6-4 and 6-5, WS-1 and WS-2).</p> <p>These [management] practices also encourage enhancing existing supply and capacity, and CRK prioritizes optimization of Corps managed projects throughout the basin as identified in Water Management Practice IU-2 (page 6-6) as opposed to construction of new water supply reservoirs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the Council agrees with this comment, the Council could address it by modifying Management Practices WS-1 and WS-2 with an additional bullet point such as: “The Council prioritizes enhancement of existing storage capacity and optimization of USACE reservoirs to meet desired flow and lake levels (Table 6-2) over the development of new reservoirs. See also Management Practices IU-1 and IU-2.”	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Comments May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<p>#6(b): For the Council's reference regarding aquifer storage and recovery, as noted by the Georgia Senate Final Report of the Long-Term Aquifer Storage Senate Study Committee and the Dissent on the Long-Term Aquifer Storage Senate Study Committee Report, implementation of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) in Georgia remains questionable, is expensive to operate, and could result in groundwater contamination (Page 6-19).³</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the Council agrees with this comment, it could drop the paragraph about ASR in Recommendation 6 (Section 6.3), which reads: <i>The Council also recommends further evaluation of the potential for the use of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR). An ASR system withdraws water from peak flows or from groundwater sources and stores that water in aquifers for later use for water supply or streamflow augmentation. A study of the potential for ASR development in Southwest Georgia to augment streamflows found inadequate groundwater productivity to support project implementation, but the results were site specific. Further investigation of this practice should fully evaluate water quality and aquifer impacts and ensure that ASR implementation will not adversely impact instream flows in dry periods.</i>	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Comments May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<p>#6(c): The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority has completed multiple, highly detailed water supply studies, beginning with the 2008 Georgia Inventory and Survey of Feasible Sites for Water Supply Reservoirs and the 2011 GEFA Water System Interconnection, Redundancy and Reliability Act Emergency Supply Plan. The more recent Georgia Water Supply Redundancy Study effectively combines and updates the two studies. The new study provides a comprehensive evaluation of all possible water supply sources in the Middle Chattahoochee River region, including new reservoir sites, possible interconnections for municipal water suppliers, and other options.⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management Practice WS-3 cites and links to this 2022 Georgia Water Supply Redundancy Study for this region. IU-3 recommends that water utilities in the region review this report and evaluate improvements to address supply redundancy.• If the Council wishes to address the rest of this comment, it could add a new bullet point to WS-1, such as: <i>The Georgia Water Supply Redundancy Study for the Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Region [add link], completed by Wood for the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority in 2022, compiles information on potential water supply storage options in the region, as well as interconnection and other water supply reliability options. This report is a useful resource to support implementation of this management practice.</i>• Note edits to IU-3 Short-Term and Long-Term Actions to correct an error in the draft plan (unrelated to this comment).	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
7. Evaluate Water Conservation		
Water Use, Wastewater Flows & Forecast Trends – Various Comments	Comments noted.	
Per capita water use evaluation and population served data are problematic	Comments noted; EPD notes water audits are currently best available data for water use, and population served data is being updated over time. If Council agrees, no change is needed to the plan at this time. KR0	
Water conservation & efficiency	Comments noted, draft plan highlights the importance of continued water conservation. If Council agrees, no change to the plan is needed at this time. KR1	

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- KR0

Steve -- This language feels too strong -- here and elsewhere. As we discussed before -- it's true to us. But we should not presume to be correct for the Council. I would add something like -- EPD notes that water audits are currently the best available... If the Council agrees, no change is needed to plan at this time.
Kristin Rowles, 2023-05-31T15:34:38.384
- SSL(0 0

sounds good
Simpson, Stephen L. (Steve), 2023-06-02T20:38:55.196
- KR1

See comment above.
Kristin Rowles, 2023-05-31T15:34:55.855
- SSL(1 0

tweaked
Simpson, Stephen L. (Steve), 2023-06-02T20:39:02.918

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Potential Response Notes	Comment Response
8. Water Quality Concerns		
Harmful algal blooms concern	Comments noted.	
Walter F. George TMDL plan	Supportive comments noted, draft plan recognizes TMDL need. If Council agrees, no change to the plan is needed at this time.	
Wastewater assimilation challenge resolution at Lumpkin WPCP	Comment noted; GAEPD is working to notify all permittees where substantial challenges were identified. If the Council wishes to address this comment, it could add a note to Tables 3-4, 3-5, 5-1, and 5-2: For facilities with substantial challenges, GAEPD is conducting outreach to discuss results and solutions. Several of the management practices in Section 6 of this plan are intended to alleviate the conditions that contribute to these challenges identified in the model results.	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Potential Response Notes	Comment Response
8. Water Quality Concerns		
Assimilative Capacity concerns	Differences between 2017 and 2023 dissolved oxygen modeling results and other comments noted. KR1	KR0
Nonpoint source controls and Water Management Practices	Supportive comments noted. If Council agrees, no change to the plan is needed at this time.	
10. Increase State Funding Section 7.1, page 7-2, consider adding reference to Georgia Funders' Forum	If the Council agrees with this comment, one possible response would be to add the sentence: "The Georgia Funders' Forum provides useful funding resources for water utilities, local governments, and others implementing management practices at https://www.ibenvironmental.com/georgia-funders-forum "	

Slide 20

KR0 If the Council agrees with this comment, one possible response would be to add this sentence...
Kristin Rowles, 2023-05-31T15:35:41.464

SSL(0 0 ok
Simpson, Stephen L. (Steve), 2023-06-02T20:44:13.557

KR1 see above comments
Kristin Rowles, 2023-05-31T15:35:51.449

SSL(1 0 ok
Simpson, Stephen L. (Steve), 2023-06-02T20:44:17.846

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<i>Miscellaneous Comments & Suggested Editorial Changes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Editorial changes that did not appear to change the meaning of the plan content and were entered into the review copy of the plan for this meeting as mark-up text.	
<i>(Page 3-6) Navigation: The Corps has recently allocated significant funding for lock and dam repair, and this section could reflect that reality.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the Council wishes to address this comment, it could add a statement or footnote in Section 3 under Navigation that reads: “The USACE has recently allocated \$33 million in funding from the Division’s Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) toward lock repairs in the Middle and Lower Chattahoochee River for Walter F. George (\$18 million) and Jim Woodruff (\$15 million), which will be further addressed in the next Regional Water Planning cycle.”	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, May 15, 2023

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
<i>Why were Langdale, Riverview, and Crow Hop Dams removed from Table 2-1?....this information could be included in Section 3.2</i>	Georgia Power has plans to decommission. Note in table to clarify. Council could choose to add information in the plan.	
<i>Page 2-8 Can the Plan include a link to the ACFS Sustainable Water Management Plan?</i>	Plan is referenced by name; Citation was added to the plan in footnotes.	
<i>Does the Georgia Land Conservation Program still exist?</i>	GAEPD confirmed that the Georgia Land Conservation Program website has been replaced: Georgia Conservation Tax Credit Program Department Of Natural Resources Division (gadnr.org)	

Slide 22

SSL(0

There were other "substantive" comments....dams and decommissioning, question about link to ACFS plan, land conservation program.
We should probably say something about these so that Council members are equipped to respond if they are asked.

Simpson, Stephen L. (Steve), 2023-06-02T20:53:09.493

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

USFWS Comments, May 17, 2023 Letter

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GAEPD response letter addresses these comments from USFWS.	
By function of this letter, we invite the Regional Water Planning Councils to include our agency into your water planning efforts so that we may assist with development of projects that consider effects to natural habitats, threatened and endangered species, and other fish and wildlife resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Directly invite representatives of USFWS to attend future Council meetings. Invite a presentation from USFWS about wildlife planning considerations at a future Council meeting.	
We recommend Regional Water Plans address the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), High Priority Habitats, High Priority Species, and High Priority Conservation Actions within each area thoroughly and uniformly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The SWAP is described in the last two paragraphs of Section 3, and the number of high priority species is summarized.Invite GADNR and USFWS to a future Council meeting to increase Council familiarity with High Priority Habitats, High Priority Species, and High Priority Conservation Action to potentially support more specific discussion of these in future updates of the plan.	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

USFWS Comments, May 17, 2023 Letter

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
All Plans should contain up-to-date numbers of species of Conservation Concern tracked by the Georgia Natural Heritage Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add the list of species to Section 2. Generate the list from the WRD web-based environmental review tool.	
All Plans should contain up-to-date species and habitats protected under the Endangered Species Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add list of species in Section 2. Use the list provided in Appendix 1 to the comments or generate a list from the USFWS IPaC web-based tool.	
All Plans should address Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waters and objectives to bring impaired waters into compliance for the benefit of the community and ecological health in the water regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans include map and discussion of impaired waters in Section 3. Management practices to address water quality are, in part, directed at addressing these water quality impairments.	

Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Rosemond, May 14, 2023 Letter

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
A. Concern regarding council representation with preference for appointees without business interests with water, with water planning expertise, having diverse experience with water	Pursuant to Section 14 of the State Water Plan, Council members are appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House and must reside in the counties of each planning region. The appointing officials may “consider pre-qualified nominees for appointment, as well as such other individuals as they may choose.” GAEPD is open to receiving any nominees for appointment to the Regional Water Planning Councils.	



Draft MCH Regional Water Plan Comments

Rosemond, May 14, 2023 Letter

Comment	Council Response Notes	Comment Response
B. Concern regarding water resource impairments, and assimilative capacity and water supply issues C. Monitoring, oversight responsibility, funding	<p>The plan addresses the current water quality conditions in Section 3, including consideration of the Georgia's Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report. The Council has considered the most current water quality data that has been collected by Georgia EPD and other entities. The Council's Plans continue to stress the need for continuous monitoring, as well as the collection of additional data. Additionally, the Councils also consider surface water quality and quality modeling (resource assessment) results that analyze water quality parameters that correlate with the state's water quality standards. Importantly, these models analyze both current conditions (including model calibration) as well as future conditions based on water demands and returns that are projected 40 years into the future. These models analyze a variety of water quality conditions, including both dry/drought and wet/stormwater-driven conditions, and can continue to be utilized in future planning cycles to analyze extreme weather events (e.g., long-term drought).</p>	

Introduction to Dam Facilities and Overview of Tour

Jay Jamison, US Army Corps of Engineers



Next Steps



Next Steps

- Regional Water Plan submission to EPD Director
- Schedule next Council meetings





Lunch & Tour

