

Memorandum

To: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council

From: Shayne Wood, CDM Smith

Date: October 15, 2020

Subject: Suwannee -Satilla Regional Water Planning Council Meeting

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council (Council) Meeting held on September 30, 2020 at University of Georgia Tifton Conference Center in Tifton, GA. This meeting also included participation virtually via the MS Teams platform. This memorandum provides a summary of the major items discussed at the Council Meeting. The meeting began at 10:00 AM and followed the agenda outlined below.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Council Chairman Scott Downing opened the meeting, welcomed Council Members and guests, and had everyone introduce themselves, including those who were participating virtually via MS Teams. Next, the previous meeting summary was reviewed. A quorum was not present but a follow-up for folks not on the call would be completed to complete approval of the meeting summary. Chairman Downing called for a Motion which was given, followed by a Second, and a vote from those council members in attendance approved the previous meeting summary. Chairman Downing then asked Council Members (CM) to review the agenda. A motion was made to approve the agenda, followed by a second and a vote passed to approve the agenda.

2) Updates from Suwannee River Water Management District (Tom Mirti and Amy Brown, SRWMD)

Mr. Mirti provided a general update from the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) in Florida to the Regional Water Council. The talk started with a high-level overview of how the water management districts are divided in Florida, indicating that there are five appointed governing boards in which each has core missions, which he described. The service areas of SRWMD consists of 15 counties in the north Central Florida, accounting for 7,640 square miles, 13 river basins and a population of about 340,000. Mr. Mirti noted that the Suwannee River was the largest river in their district boundary and that a large part of the Suwannee River's watershed originates in Georgia and overlaps with a large part of Georgia's Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Region. Ms. Brown co-presented with Mr. Mirti and focused on the key metrics on water supply demands and water supply planning process in the State of Florida. It was noted that currently the draft estimated groundwater use for the SRWMD was approximately 240 million gallons per day (MGD) with agricultural making the up the major use of 139 mgd (58%) and paper mill and mining being other major industrial demands. The current approved groundwater reports are available online and are updated every five years.

Mr. Mirti also provided an overall review of the components of the regional water supply plan, which included supply planning, water demand estimates, projected future demands, water resource assessments, conservation potentials, water source options, water supply and water resource development and funding options. A regional groundwater model is currently being utilized and planning is done in conjunction with the St. Johns Water Management District (just east of SRWMD). Planning updates were highlighted and should be completed by 2022 (Target Completion Date), noting that the district is split into two (Eastern and Western Planning Regions) and a horizon that covers 2020 – 2045. Ms. Mirti noted that throughout this year, the final reach out to stakeholders in both the eastern and western portions of the district were completed and are represented in the projected total use.

Mr. Mirti end his presentation with a summary of the draft SRWMD MFL schedule (showing the proposed MFL's to be adopted through 2021, 2022 and 2023). Some of the on-going discussions on MFL's included whether the MFL's are being met under current water demands and whether they will be met under future water demands. If gap analysis indicates issues for meeting MFL's, potential recovery and prevention strategy tools were discussed from identifying projects (recharge projects, drainage well replacements, rapid infiltration basin) and regulatory tools.

Question/Comment: a CM asked about the general trend of recharging the aquifer in Florida.

Response: Mr. Mirti noted that recharging of aquifer using recharge wells is something that is emerging that that Florida is currently working through the technical details and treatment for recharge. The CM noted that recharge of the aquifer has been a challenging.

3) Updates from Suwannee River Partnership (Kelly Aue, UF IFAS)

Ms. Aue started her presentation by providing an overview and notes that she serves as the outreach coordinator for the University of Florida IFAS Suwannee River Partnership (SRP). The SRP has been around for 20 years and works to address the water quality and quantity issues in the Suwannee and Santa Fe River Basins. The SRP is comprised of both private and public groups in the Suwannee River Valley and meets quarterly to plan research-based solutions to protect and conserve water. Currently the partnership has been working towards a 3-month build and connect campaign and a 1-year plan on "on-farm" demonstrations and identifying projects for conservation. Notable figure that was included during Ms. Aue's discussion included that BMAP needs to be reduced by 4,075,935 lb-N/year within the next 20 years, citing that Agriculture is a critical component of that.

Notable case studies and success stories in agriculture were highlighted, specifically noting that a large corn producer in Lee, Florida was able to reduce nitrogen by 250,000 lbs and saved 200 million gallons of water annually. Ms. Aue noted that the SRP is currently continuing to publish and update their website (UF/IFAS NFREC Suwannee Valley, <https://svaec.ifas.ufl.edu/research-programs/nfrec-sv-research-reports/>) to help expand awareness to farmers on best management practices throughout the State. The SRP is continuing to improve its outreach to educate industry and the public and will have its own social media pages in the coming year (all outreach currently is through the UF/IFAS pages). Ms. Aue concluded that the "next steps" will be to duplicate on-farm demonstrations, continue

to develop the SRP website and partner with agencies that have the resources to reach a larger group within the Florida. The ultimate goal is to identify more opportunities to be a “boots on the ground” organization. The presentation concluded with Ms. Aue sharing the BMAP’s website for restoring impaired water by reducing pollutant loadings in Florida (<https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/basin-management-action-plans-bmaps>).

4) Updates on Technical Work Supporting the 2020-2022 Regional Water Plan Update Cycle (Bill Davis, CDM Smith)

Mr. Davis of CDM Smith provided a general overview of the technical work supporting the 2020-2022 Regional Water Plan Update Cycle. Some of the key statistical forecasted figures were introduced for municipal water use and demand through between 2019 and 2060. It was noted that current Municipal Use in the Suwannee-Satilla region is 39.52 MGD and the forecasted value in 2060 is 39.58 MGD (no major change). Additionally, it was discussed that the Georgia Environmental Protection (EPD) is currently reviewing demands per capita and water audits were under submission reviewing the general forecasted values for the region. On the wastewater generation side, septic systems and discharge permits from facilities that have a point discharge were also being taken into account for the forecasted projections. The wastewater forecast for Suwannee-Satilla through 2060 is 41.3 MGD (of which 35.42 MGD of point source discharge and remaining septic systems/land application).

Mr. Davis discussed the general energy water demand forecast associated with thermoelectric power generation for the State of Georgia, noting the key stakeholder groups include GA Power, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, Dalton Utilities, and the Georgia Public Commission. Thermoelectric generating units (coal-fired, natural gas or nuclear) were presented across the States and Mr. Davis noted that the energy stakeholder group continues to provide the updated list of state-wide generation for estimating withdrawal and consumption. Additionally, the energy forecast was touched upon, noting the forecast methodology and using the unique “power-to-production” method to help with developing the water demand forecast associated with energy production.

Lastly, Mr. Davis presented on going work related to the Industrial demand forecasting. Mr. Davis noted that stakeholder groups were assembled based on industrial sectors (paper and forest products, manufacturing, food processing and mining. This list of participating stakeholders included Rayoneir, Georgia Power, SAFT, Irving Consumer Products, Toyo Tire, BASF, Covia, and Kamin. Mr. Davis noted that these subgroups were formed to inform on the specific demand forecast for each sector: Poultry/Food Processing, mining, paper and forest products, and manufacturing). It was noted that many of these sub-groups developed surveys for their constituencies across the State of Georgia to help inform the forecasting effort. This included getting information such as average water use, water sources, those industries that get water from municipal sources, discharge, etc.). Mr. Davis noted that the industrial water demand forecasts will be completed in November 2020 and then shared in more detail with the councils at up coming council meetings across the State of Georgia.

Mr. Davis concluded providing a brief mention of agricultural forecasting which is on-going and being led by Mr. Mark Masters.

Comment: A Council Member noted at the end of the presentation to the group that the water planning council needs to be particularly involved with reviewing and understanding the supply and demand for water and water quality in the region, especially as it relates to agriculture given how important agriculture is to the Suwannee-Satilla region.

5) Technical Committee Members Report Out

It was noted that Scott Downing is serving as a technical committee member for the council on the Municipal Demand Forecast team and that Brittney Hull is serving as a technical committee member for the council on the Industrial Demand Forecast. Mr. Downing had no major report-out on the municipal side at this time, as that work is still ongoing.

6) Seed Grant Updates (Shayne Wood, CDM Smith)

Mr. Wood provided a general updated on Seed Grant Funding timelines and things to be looking ahead. He noted that the Pre-application meetings with EPD should be held by October 16, 2020 and applications must be postmarked by October 31, 2020. Mr. Downing noted that the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority will be providing the required cash match of up to \$10,000 for Lake Beatrice Seed Grant project. It was noted that USACE was also approached for funding through the Planning Assistance to States (PAS) program. Additionally, Mr. Hull noted that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission has two on-going projects include an EPD Seed Grant Project and a 319-H Grant improvement project (slated to finish by spring of 2021) and both of these projects are underway, including:

- \$38,000 of agricultural BMP's that still need to be finished.
- EPD Seed Grant on-going project (impaired water body analysis) that kicked-off that project in the summer. It was noted that stakeholder group would be held for water quality monitoring before the end of November 2020. This will yield an initial prioritization on the streams more testing needs to be done.

Dr. Hawkins noted on his on-going EPD Seed Grant project that COVID-19 lockdown did impact some of their progress as they didn't get the chance to get out this past summer as previously planned. Two areas noted included focus on integrated pest management and that current BMP's are working with golf courses with the National Golf Superintendents Association of America. Mr. Wood concluded that if any folks need help on the Seed Grant Applications, to reach out and CDM Smith can assist with helping setup pre-application meetings and getting the letter of support completed.

7) Council Members Questions

No questions were brought forth from council members.

8) Public Comments

Mr. Daryl Muse noted that approximately 40% reduction on the nitrogen was published in the Suwannee River's Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) for the next 20-years (responding to

earlier question pertaining Ms. Aue's presentation). Mr. Hawkins noted that if council members need any support pertaining to the septic programming, to reach out to him, accordingly. No local elected officials had any comments and the public comment period concluded.

9) Next Steps

Mr. Wood noted that a virtual setting for the next meeting would be possible again if attendees preferred to have that as an option and applauded the group's efforts and patience in working with us to be able to hold a hybrid meeting that allowed for both an in-person and virtual meeting, given the current circumstances. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 pm.

7) Meeting Attendance

Suwannee- Satilla Regional Water Planning Council members in attendance:

- Scott Downing, Eugene Dyal, Dan Raines, Michael Edgy, Joe Lewis

Georgia EPD Representative in attendance:

- Cliff Lewis

Regional Water Planning Council contractors in attendance:

- Shayne Wood, Yanni Polematidis and Bill Davis (CDM Smith)

Public/Agency attendees:

- Tom Mirti, Suwannee River Water Management District
- Amy Brown, Suwannee River Water Management District
- Kelly Aue, UF IFAS
- Jody Redding, Office of Senator Kelly Loeffler
- Darryl Muse, City of Valdosta
- James, H. Brent, Georgia Power
- Gary Hawkins, University of Georgia
- James Robert Wilson, University of Georgia
- Cherry, Gregory, USGS
- John Clarke, USGS
- Corey Hull, Southern Georgia Regional Commission
- Bob Sherrier, Southern Environmental Law Center
- Maureen Metzler, Packaging Corporation of America
- Bert Earley, Georgia Forestry Commission
- Matt Mrizek, Georgia Forestry Commission