

Memorandum

To: Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council

From: Danielle Honour and Rick Brown, CDM Smith

Date: March 21, 2016

Subject: Altamaha Council Meeting 1 – Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Process

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 1, held on March 3, 2016 at the South Eastern Technical College, Vidalia, Georgia. The meeting began at 9:32 AM and followed the agenda with one minor change in the order of presentations (the agriculture demand estimate and method update was moved in front of the Section 319 (h) presentation):

1) Welcome and Introductions/Approve Agenda

Chairman Ed Jeffords called the meeting to order and asked Council Members and guests to introduce themselves (see the end of this meeting summary for a list of attendees). Chairman Jeffords briefed the Council on the status of new member appointments and he noted that Council Members are appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House and this can take time, but we are working on getting appointments completed. Chairman Jeffords expressed his appreciation to the Council Members that have been regularly attending the Council meetings and actively participating.

Chairman Jeffords highlighted the regions overall water resources and commented on the abundance of water resources and their importance to the economics and quality of life in the region. He cautioned the Council that some of the neighboring regions do not have nearly the abundance of water resources. He pointed out that understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the other planning regions is very important for determining how their plans might affect resources within the Altamaha region. He then requested Council Members to think about attending other Council meetings in some of the neighboring regions. Lastly, he requested that the planning team provide routine updates on rules, policy, and legislation that might affect water resources. Chairman Jeffords asked CDM Smith, the Planning Contractor (PC) to proceed with the agenda. The PC reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any suggested changes. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

2) Regional Water Planning Overview/Schedule

The PC presented the following information:

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- Overview of the planning areas, key contacts, and contractors supporting those areas.
- Key water planning individuals from Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the Consulting team.
- Key elements of the planning process and the timeline for completing these elements and the Regional Water Plan revision.
- A summary of the regional vision and goals, with a reminder that these should be kept in mind as new information is developed to ensure that the findings of the Council's Plan are consistent with the vision and goals for the region. It was also noted that the handout of the vision statement was an original version (and not the final version that was incorporated into the Council's Plan) and the PC will update the handout. A member of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources commended the Altamaha Council for their inclusion of fishing and wildlife as a value and noted the Council is leading in this regard.

Question: A Council Member (CM) asked about the format of the joint meeting.

Answer: EPD indicated that the joint meeting format will be a larger morning session to talk about the resource assessments followed by smaller breakout meetings in the afternoon. For the Altamaha Council, the group breakout meeting will focus on shared resources with members attending from the Middle Ocmulgee, Upper Oconee, Altamaha and Suwannee–Satilla Councils.

Question/Comment: A CM asked about preparation prior to the joint meeting and indicated that it would be helpful to become more familiar with the other planning regions' gaps and challenges, from a water supply and water quality perspective. Another CM suggested that the PC prepare a 1 or 2 page summary for each planning council – highlighting their top priorities, gaps they are facing, and differences in the plans.

Question/Comment: Can we get a copy of the PowerPoint for today and it would be helpful to have a copy of the schedule and future PowerPoint presentations prior to the meeting.

Answer: The PC noted that they will post the information to Gov Delivery, and the water plan website as well as sending the requested information to Council. It was also noted that the joint meeting will be held in June 2016, most likely in Dublin, GA.

The PC continued this agenda item highlighting elements of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed during the development of the 2011 plans (signed by Council, EPD, and Georgia Department of Community Affairs); the Operating Procedures and Rules for Meetings; and the Councils' Public Involvement Plan. EPD noted that they had prepared two documents for Council consideration and provided the Council with a summary of the documents.

- i. An MOA extension document was discussed. The document, upon execution, will officially extend the agreement and helps address the procedural topic outlined below. EPD noted if the Council supports the extension it could be signed by the Chair. Council was comfortable having the Chair sign on behalf of Council.

- ii. A redline version of Councils' Operating Procedures (Attachment A of the MOA) was distributed and discussed. The proposed revisions are intended to allow Council to achieve a quorum for decision making in light of the status of appointments and Council member meeting attendance. The proposed changes in essence defines "active council members" as the criteria for determining a quorum. It was generally agreed that the proposal is a good approach. It was further agreed that the proposal would go to all Council Members to ensure they are fully informed and have the opportunity to become active members for the review and revision process. A motion was made by John Roller, second by Rex Bullock and unanimously approved by Council to adopt the proposed redline and proceed as noted above.

Chairman Jeffords further noted that Council does not currently have a Vice Chair and indicated that one is needed. He asked Council Members to think about serving and stated that this topic would be revisited later in the day. Council members took the topic up immediately and unanimously elected Paul Stavriotis as Vice Chair of the Altamaha Council.

Chairman Jeffords also took the opportunity to seek volunteers for attending neighboring Council meetings. Through a process of volunteering and discussion, the following decisions were made:

- Coastal Georgia – Paul Stavriotis (the Chair noted he would contact Council Members DeWitt and Thomas since Paul cannot attend next week's meeting)
- Middle Ocmulgee – Buddy Pittman
- Savannah-Upper Ogeechee – Cleve Edenfield
- Suwannee-Satilla – Paul Stavriotis
- Upper Flint – Rex Bullock
- Upper Oconee – John Roller and/or Mark Burns

Council requested a complete list of meeting dates and locations and they were provided this information later in the day.

3) Current Agricultural Demand Estimate and Method for Updates

The PC introduced Mark Masters, Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center (GWPPC) at Albany State University. Mr. Masters is leading the team that is updating the agricultural forecast. Mr. Masters proceeded with his presentation and made the following points:

- The GWPPC is teamed with members of the University of Georgia, Agriculture and Applied Economics. Both entities were involved with the original forecast, but GWPPC is the lead entity for this round of planning.
- Updates will be conducted for irrigated acreage, livestock, and nursery irrigation.
- The original forecast utilized three major steps/inputs for obtaining irrigated acres: 1) wetted acreage from GIS, 2) meter data at select locations to refine the wetted acreage data base, 3) desktop analysis of aerial imagery to identify missing wetted acres.
- Crop water application rates were derived using a crop demand forecast model based on crop type, county, and soil type, and considers climatic conditions.
- The updated method refines the above inputs with: 1) information on animal counts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistic Services; 2) updated wetted acreage information from detailed mapping at some locations in South Georgia (Flint, Savannah-Upper Ogeechee, and Suwannee-Satilla); and 3) additional meter data.
- Mr. Masters presented preliminary results which can be viewed from the Council Meeting PowerPoint. Select points made by Mr. Masters included the following: statewide, the biggest change in animals/livestock was an increase in swine count and Altamaha saw one of the largest increases. Between 2009 and 2014, the Altamaha region has experienced a decrease in surface water use, and a moderate increase in acreage and groundwater use, especially from new center pivot irrigation.

Question/Comment: During the presentation several CMs asked for more information on sources of meter data, percent of area covered, etc. It was agreed that more detail would be provided as the forecasts are complete. Additionally, several CMs asked if more work could be done in the Altamaha region in the way of detailed wetted acreage mapping and asked what they could do to help make that happen. Chairman Jeffords suggested the Council reach out to their legislators to let them know more funding is needed so that the Altamaha region can also be mapped.

Question/Comment: PC asked about changes in sources - when the farm ponds were mapped in Round 1, the source was documented and the PC worked with Cliff Lewis' group in Tifton. Mr. Masters noted that more work has been done since Round 1 to review source assumptions, and that work is being factored into the agricultural forecast updates that will be presented at the joint Council meeting in June.

Council thanked Mr. Masters for his presentation.

4) Section 319 (h) Georgia's Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant

Jennifer Welte, EPD, presented this agenda item. Ms. Welte made the following points during the presentation:

- EPD is making money available via special award to develop or revise a 9-element Watershed Management Plan (WMP) in each region. The funding is targeted towards subgrantees that will work on behalf of the Regional Water Planning. Funding can be made via sole source for eligible subgrantees, which must be public entities or local governments.
- Several existing 319(h) projects were briefly highlighted, including the Horse Creek project in the Altamaha region which was awarded to Pine Country RC&D.
- Information was presented on the priority watersheds identified in the Altamaha region that would be good candidates to consider for this program. Additionally, a list of potential grant recipients was provided.

Question/Comment – Several CMs noted that they would like to consider taking this opportunity as it makes sense to bring available financial resources to the region to address priority watersheds. However, they felt they needed more details on the program and how priority watersheds are delineated. It was agreed that the PC would work with EPD and Department of Community Affairs to: obtain more information on priority watersheds, determine if there are any current WMPs and if so whether any need to be revised, determine if a WMP needs to be completed, outline some of the water quality issues, and provide a little more information on who could implement a potential project(s).

5) Updated Population Projections

The PC presented the following information:

- Source of information for updated population projections.
- Georgia's historical population growth over time.
- Updated state and regional population projections that also show the comparison to the Round 1 projections.
- The methodology employed to perform the population projection updates.
- The current population projections are more in line with historic trends. PC noted that the current predicted growth for the state (as well as the region), while still showing positive growth over time, is not anticipated to increase at the rate that was predicted for Round 1. Round 1 projections were developed prior to the 2010 Census and represented an unusually high rate of population growth when viewed in a historical context. The Round 1 projections were influenced by historical levels of in migration and relatively high birth rates at the time the projections were developed.
- While the state's population continues to grow, it is important to recognize where the growth is occurring (i.e., urbanized areas and larger cities). Between 2010 and 2013,

census data showed that about half of Georgia's counties have experienced population declines. The majority of counties with declining populations are considered rural counties.

- For the Altamaha Region, the updated projection shows an increase in population of approximately 30,000 people from 2010 through 2050.

Question/Comment: A meeting guest stated that it would also be important for the Council to look at where population is increasing upstream and downstream of the region as this can place additional demand on the availability of the region's water resources.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated that growth is needed in the Altamaha Region. These new projections can be used by the local communities to help guide decisions for growth. A lack of growth (or slow growth) also has an economic impact in terms of tax revenue on local governments. The take home message is that the region needs to start planning for lower and/or declining population and aging infrastructure.

Question/Comment: A CM requested that the populations by County be provided to the Council.

Answer: County-level population results will be provided to the Council.

Question: A CM asked if population could be broken out by city.

Answer: Population results are currently available at the county level only.

6) Municipal Water/Wastewater Forecast Updates

The PC presented the following information for municipal water forecast updates:

- Review of the Round 1 methodology used to calculate municipal water demands.
- Review of the per capita adjustment factor (average % rate of change from 2010 to 2014) that was applied to the Round 1 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) to arrive at the updated gpcd value for calculating publicly-supplied municipal water demands.
- Municipal gpcd results for the Altamaha Region. Overall, there was a very small change across the region between the Round 1 and updated values (138 gpcd regional average in Round 1 vs. 136 gpcd regional average updated value). PC stated that population is the more sensitive parameter in terms of calculating municipal water demands.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated that the trend observed in their region is movement from the incorporated area to the unincorporated areas of the county where residents can use a self-supplied well and septic tank so that there are no utility bills.

Question: A CM mentioned the 75 gpcd for self supplied vs. 136 gpcd for the public supply wells and asked that the results be confirmed.

Answer: The PC stated that self supplied gpcd is typically lower because it does not include commercial water use and usually has lower outdoor water use.

Question: Chairman Jeffords stated that the results do not raise any red flags for the region, only that it reiterates that the resource is still available and he would like to understand usage and demands for the adjacent regions. Are these adjacent regions going to infringe upon our region?

Answer: The PC replied that the pressure on the resource is less compared to the Round 1 forecast across the regions due to the slower growth of population in the updated forecast. The PC also went on to state that the forecast does take into consideration conservation laws and plumbing code efficiencies (i.e., natural retrofits that occur over time). The PC went on to state that EPD is currently taking a closer look at an additional source of information regarding County-level per capita values as part of their due diligence, and will come back to the Council with further information as that analysis progresses. The additional source of information was used when considering the 2010-2014 trends and arriving at the per capita adjustment factors. The current snapshot of the additional source of information, which is still under review, shows a regional average gpcd value of 123 gpcd.

The PC then presented the following information for municipal wastewater forecast updates:

- Review of the Round 1 methodology used to estimate total municipal wastewater generation.
- Review of the methodology used to update the municipal wastewater generation forecast, and updated results by region.

Based on the results presented, PC wants to follow-up on why the municipal wastewater forecast for this region seems to be increasing faster compared to the population projections and municipal water demand. This may be due to using the new methodology or could be due to the assumption of transitioning away from septic to centralized wastewater. The sense of the Council for their region is that many people are moving out of the cities and into the rural areas so they are wondering if there may be more of a movement towards septic.

Question/Comment: A CM stated that the local health departments would be a good source of information to detect an increase in septic tank users. The CM also suggested that infiltration and inflow (I&I) may be contributing as well.

7) Industrial Water/Wastewater Forecast Updates

The PC presented the following information for industrial water/wastewater forecast updates:

- How industrial water and wastewater demand forecasts were developed in Round 1.
- Review of Round 1 industrial water demands by category and source.
- Review of Round 1 industrial wastewater flow by discharge method.
- Unless there is a significant change to industry in the region, EPD is not proposing to change the industrial forecasts during this Plan update process.

Question: A CM asked why employment was used for industrial forecasts when water use information is available.

Answer: The PC explained that in a lot of cases, industry's water use is proprietary information and not available. Employment data was the next best metric to gauge water use by industry.

Question/Comment: A meeting attendee representing Rayonier stated that they expect their water use and wastewater to stay the same so this assumption may need to be checked in the update process.

8) Energy Forecast Updates

The PC presented the following information for energy forecast updates:

- Review of thermoelectric power facilities with water withdrawal permits in the State of Georgia.
- Review of the energy sector water demand forecasting methodology from Round 1.
- Updates to energy sector water demands are not yet complete and will be shared with Council once available.
- There is one major power generating facility (Plant Hatch) in the region and no major changes in water use at this facility are expected between Round 1 and this update.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated that the cheapest fuel source will drive demand due to changes in the market and the transition from coal fired technologies to the use of gas turbines.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated that there are incentives at the State level to grow manufacturing and a reduction in energy sales tax for new industries is being offered. This could possibly be a driver for growth.

9) Appointment of Subcommittee

The PC then introduced the concept of appointing subcommittees for the review and revision process. Chairman Jeffords stated that the only subcommittee activity is to encourage interaction with other regions by the assignments made to Council members. Council also requested to review meeting material ahead of meetings.

EPD offered to schedule a follow-up webinar/teleconference to report back on some of the follow-up items asked during the meeting.

10) Public Comment/Local Elected Official Comments

Prior to public comment, EPD gave a brief update on legislative activities, mentioning the following: House Bill (HB) 1036 (moratorium on fuel oil pipeline projects), House Resolution (HR) 1098 (re: aquifer storage and recovery), Senate Bill (SB) 326 (requiring erosion and sediment control plans to be reviewed by registered engineers), HB 966 (re: buffers), and SB 321 (proposes to make certain water and utility use data confidential).

One member of the public made a comment and explained that she is a Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia and is studying the process of regional water planning. She passed out questionnaires and asked the Council to complete and return to her as it will aid in her research for her dissertation.

11) Wrap Up/Council Meeting 2 Preview/Council Meeting 1 Evaluation

Chair Jeffords and the PC wrapped up the meeting.

Question/Comment: A CM requested that council members should reach out and encourage the Council Members who were not present to attend future meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 3:11 PM.

12) Meeting Attendance

Altamaha Regional Water Council members in attendance:

- Guy Rex Bulloch, James Mark Burns, Cleve Edenfield, Len Hauss, Ed Jeffords, Buddy Pittman, John Roller, and Paul Stavriotis

Georgia EPD Representatives in attendance:

- Jennifer Welte and Cliff Lewis

Regional Water Council contractors in attendance:

- Danielle Honour, Rick Brown and Shayne Wood (CDM Smith), Katherine Atteberry (Jacobs), and Mark Masters (Albany State/GWPPC)

Public attendees:

- Byron Bouch (representing Georgia DNR – Fisheries Management)
- Kimberly Edge (representing Treutlen County Commission)
- Deatre Denion (Georgia DCA)
- Byron Feimster (representing Georgia Power)
- Danielle Jensen-Ryan (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Georgia)
- Brian Mooney (representing Rayonier)
- James Pope (representing Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission)
- Michael Roberts (representing GEFA)
- Burt Early (representing Georgia Forestry Commission)