

Memorandum

To: Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council

From: Danielle Honour, CDM Smith

Date: December 22, 2016

*Subject: Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 3
Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Process*

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning (RWP) Council Meeting 3, held on November 17, 2016 at the Oconee Fall Line Technical College (Dubose Porter Center) in Dublin, GA. A Joint Council Meeting was held for the six eastern RWP councils (Altamaha, Coastal Georgia, Middle Ocmulgee, Suwannee-Satilla, Savannah- Upper Ogeechee and Upper Oconee) from 10 AM to 4 PM. The Altamaha RWP Council held a brief individual council meeting during the afternoon portion of the joint meeting. This memorandum provides a summary of the items discussed at the individual Altamaha RWP Council meeting that was held from approximately 1:15 PM to 2:25 PM and followed the agenda:

1) Debrief with Council Members regarding information discussed during the Joint Meeting

CDM Smith, the Planning Contractor (PC) opened up the meeting and asked if the Council Members had any additional questions or comments from the morning portion of the joint session.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated that he has concerns regarding how the gaps are defined based on the results of the resource assessment presented thus far. Specifically, for water quality, he is having difficulty identifying exactly where the gaps may exist in our region and which streams are critical. Secondly, he is concerned about the region using limited financial resources to help with gap closure, especially for those planning nodes outside the region and located long distances downstream.

Question/Comment: Several Council Members (CMs) had difficulty locating the planning nodes with respect to their region during the morning presentation of the surface water quantity resource assessment.

Response: To help address some of these concerns, the PC projected some maps on the screen that showed the Council and County boundaries with respect to the local drainage area (watershed boundaries) and the planning nodes.

The PC then went on to provide: a high level summary of select forecast information; a summary of surface and groundwater resource assessment information; a preliminary approach to shared

resource analysis and potential gaps; and an initial review of management practices based on updated forecasts, resource assessments and regional vision and goals. A brief overview of the demand forecasting results with respect to population growth, municipal and industrial water and wastewater demand was presented and the counties with the highest forecasted changes in each of these areas were highlighted. The PC then presented a list of the planning nodes with surface water quantity gaps, the counties within the region affected by the gap and other Planning Councils who share the resource. The PC also pointed out that the planning nodes with potential surface water gaps are primarily impacted by agricultural surface water use.

An overview of the surface water quality/assimilative capacity resource assessment was presented. The PC explained that the assimilative capacity for individual reaches appears to be improving under the future condition but this is also based on the assumptions made by EPD which include more stringent permit limits for wastewater discharges. The results of nutrient loading for wet and dry years were also shown graphically and the PC explained that areas of higher loading in dry years may be indicative of point sources and areas of higher loading in wet years may be indicative of nonpoint source pollution in runoff. Lastly, the PC summarized the results for estuaries and discussed the limited assimilative capacity in the lower reaches of the Altamaha River. While the results for the Altamaha Sound show relatively moderate to good assimilative capacity, the lack of assimilative capacity in some river segments may be due to slower moving waters which contribute to naturally low DO levels.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords re-stated that based on the results of the assessment, he is having difficulty telling exactly where gaps occur in the region with respect to water quality and asked how EPD can further help the Council better define this.

Response: The PC stated that one way to approach it would be through a geographic information system (GIS) exercise and overlay the stream segments with the heat maps to determine if there is a correlation between areas of high nutrient loading and stream segments with limited assimilative capacity. Previous additional information prepared by EPD (Dr. Liz Booth) can also be used to supplement the information for stream segments where limited assimilative capacity may be more related to a natural condition versus a manmade induced condition. The PC will coordinate further with EPD to help provide more clarity regarding the results and implications for the Councils.

The PC then went on to provide a brief summary related to the groundwater resource assessment. While there are no gaps identified in the region, the Council will want to continue with water conservation practices and, as presented and discussed at the last Joint Council meeting on June 23, groundwater resources may be considered for use to help address a portion of the potential surface water gaps. The PC emphasized that due to limitations on groundwater resources in the Coastal region, increased coordination and discussion between the two Councils will be important.

Question/Comment: One of the CMs asked which counties in the Altamaha Region were subject to the 24 County Coastal Permitting Plan.

Response: The PC did not have the plan accessible during the meeting but would follow up and provide the answer for Council. *Update:* Seven counties in the Altamaha region are located in the

“green zone” where there are no pumping restrictions from the Upper Floridan aquifer. These include Appling, Candler, Emanuel, Evans, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne Counties.

The PC then further explained the concept of shared resources within the region and that addressing gaps will require evaluating availability and demands at the watershed level. Council boundaries and demand forecast summaries are currently county-based and GIS and other tools can be used to examine gaps from a watershed perspective. The PC then re-visited the maps projected on the screen that showed the Council and County boundaries with respect to the local drainage areas and the planning nodes used in the surface water availability resource assessment analysis.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords asked how the Council is going to address shared resources.

Response: The PC stated that the formation of a sub-committee is being planned and may be comprised of Council members and key entities who represent specific water users. The sub-committee would enable further discussions to be held about addressing potential gaps at planning nodes where there are shared resources between multiple Councils.

Question/Comment: Chairman Jeffords stated he would prefer to have the sub-committee meeting prior to scheduling the next Council meeting. He would also prefer to coordinate internally over the next couple of weeks with Council members to discuss the needs of the region and identify who should be part of the sub-committee. He stated that there may also be a need to coordinate with western portions of the state for a sub-committee related to water uses in the Lower Flint region.

Response: EPD responded that the sub-committee meeting would be planned for the January/February timeframe.

The PC then briefly discussed management practices and noted that the Council will re-visit and refine (where necessary) the management practices presented in the 2011 Regional Water Plan. A handout of the management practices summary from the 2011 Regional Water Plan was also distributed to Council Members. The PC reminded the Council that there were over 70 management practices identified in the original plan.

Question/Comment: A CM asked how the 70 management practices were identified.

Response: The PC responded that at the time of initial plan development, the management practices represented a list of potential activities that could be applicable in the region. This phase of the plan review and revision process will give Council Members an opportunity to review, refine and potentially consolidate the management practices and prioritize the ones that are most appropriate for the region.

2) Council Meeting Business

The CMs then conducted Council Meeting business, which included:

- 319(h) grant update (Rahn Milligan from Pine Country RC&D).

- Approving the meeting summary from the June 23, 2016 Council Meeting.
- Follow up discussion from the “office hours” teleconference session held on September 29, 2016.
- New business.

319(h) Grant Update

Rahn Milligan from Pine County RC&D provided a brief update on the status of the 319(h) grant process. Currently, Pine County RC&D is working to finalize the contracts with EPD. Chairman Jeffords asked Council members Mark Burns and John Roller to provide coordination with Pine County RC&D during the watershed plan development as the selected priority water area is in Montgomery and Wheeler Counties.

Meeting Summary

The PC asked if there were any questions or comments on the CM2 meeting summary that was distributed at the end of July. The Council did not have any comments and voted to approve the meeting summary.

Office Hours

The PC asked if the CMs had any follow-up questions from the September 29, 2016 office hours session. EPD also asked if CMs liked the webinar format. Chairman Jeffords stated that he had no questions and that CMs like the webinar platform for such meetings.

New Business

The PC asked if there was any new or other business the Council would like to discuss. No new business was brought up, but a CM made the following requests for the PC to follow up on: 1) provide the construction and operating (planning level) costs for a 1 mgd well installed in the upper Floridan aquifer; and, 2) provide guidance on what the current rules state with regards to mitigation banking.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 PM.

5) Meeting Attendance

Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council members in attendance:

- Rex Bullock, Gerald DeWitt, Len Hauss, Ed Jeffords, John Roller, and Paul Stavriotis

Georgia EPD Representative in attendance:

- Jennifer Welte

Altamaha Council Meeting 2 Summary

December 22, 2016

Page 5

Regional Water Planning Council contractors in attendance:

- Danielle Honour, Brennan Schneider (CDM Smith)

Public/Agency attendees:

- Donald Harrison (representing Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division, Fisheries Management)
- Rahn Milligan (representing Pine Country RC&D)