



Georgia's State Water Plan

To: Coosa-North Georgia (CNG) Water Planning Council
From: Christine Voudy, GAEPD
Brian Skeens, Jacobs
Michelle Vincent, Jacobs
Craig Hensley, Jacobs
Subject: **Meeting Summary: CNG Regional Water Planning Council Meeting**
Date: **March 24, 2021**

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Coosa North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council Meeting held virtually on March 24, 2021 on the Teams meeting platform. This memorandum provides a summary of the items discussed at the Council Meeting that was held from approximately 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

1. Registration and Open Teams Call

Meeting began at 9:00 AM.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Brooke Anderson welcomed the group to the meeting. Brian Skeens gave a roll call of the participants to confirm attendance.

3. Council Business

Members briefly reviewed the meeting agenda and meeting summary from the September 30, 2020 Council Meeting.

a. Approve minutes: No changes or additions were recommended to the last Council meeting's summary or agenda, Brooke Anderson called for a motion to approve last meeting minutes. Haynes Johnson moved, and Alex Sullivan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Agenda: The Chair also called for a motion to approve today's agenda. John Bennett made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alex Sullivan seconded, and motion passed without dissent.

Chairman Anderson asked for an update on the Seed Grant Status.

c. Seed Grant Updates

Erin Lincoln from Tetrattech gave an update on the 303(d) Stream Prioritization Tool project, a seed grant application that was eventually funded through Section 391(h) funds.

Streams were evaluated for steam health on a scale of 1-20, based on variety of metrics, including water quality criteria, primarily bacteria, and Fish communities/IBI.

After prioritizing system, two streams/watersheds were prioritized and targeted for further sampling:

- Nottley River for Fecal Coliform
- Wolf and Trap Creek for fish sampling.

Question/Comment:

Liz Booth: EPD is updating our bacteria criteria to E coli. When you sample for bacteria can you test for both E coli and fecal coliform?

Comment: Liz Booth: The fish metrics were re-evaluated last year so please ensure you are using the newest metric scoring (available on EPD's website.)

4. Council Updates

a. GAEPD Updates

Christine Voudy from GA EPD gave an update on Regional Water Planning, including planning process, resource assessments, and water and wastewater forecasts. Coordination with the Metro District continues. Planning processes kicked off in 2020, with estimated plan completion in 2022. Council plans and Metro Plan update are on same schedule. Updates are currently underway to modeling tools used for water quality, Groundwater Availability, and Surface Water Availability.

Fl v. GA update

Florida filed initial claim with Supreme Court in 2013 related to apportionment in the ACF basin. Initial proceedings completed in 2018. Ruling expected this term – ends June 2021.

Question: Are we following any other lawsuits, like the Water Control Manual?

Answer: Good resources include the ARC and Metro District website for information on other current lawsuits. EPD can bring updates to the Council on other litigation as well. Would like to hear about the status of the Water Control Manuals.

b. Industrial and Energy Water and Wastewater Forecasting

Industrial Water demand forecast which was not updated for last round of planning, is being revised and updated for this round of planning. A group of industrial stakeholders from around the state was formed

and held an initial meeting on June 3 and a final meeting on November 13, 2020. Forecasting for industrial was further subdivided into several industrial categories, including mining, manufacturing, paper and paper products and food processing.

Question: Does the Energy demand include the closing of plant Hammond?

Answer: The energy forecast included anything that Georgia Power included in its 2019 Integrated Resource Plan. Brian: doesn't include any plant Hammond water, but does include water from facility co-located with Dalton Utilities.

c. Municipal Demand Forecasting

The municipal stakeholder group met on April 16 to review methodology and initial data collection, and on June 3 to review draft, and the final meeting was held February 2, 2021 to view revised and completed forecasting results. Brooke Anderson is the CNG representative on the stakeholder group. The topics below were covered during the discussion.

Water:

- Municipally – supplied industrial demand was incorporated into these results.
- Updated per capita demand based on GAEPD water audit submissions for systems greater than 3,300.
- For high per capita, tracking down potential industrial users, adjusting as necessary.
- Municipal public supply – transfers factored into different counties. There are 30 county to county transfers.
- Presented results for municipal demands. Tracks very closely to the 2017 projections out to 2050. Very similar based on populations projections, only different across the region by about 2MGD.

Wastewater:

- Municipal wastewater - % on septic tanks is from Georgia public health or census characteristics. Direct discharge and land application from GA EPD data.
- Presented data by county and by method of disposal. In comparison with the 2017, the municipal wastewater total amount is a little lower, but this is mostly driven by increases in septic. 14 MGD lower for point source and LAS. Wastewater forecasts go to 2060, water projections to 2050.

Comment: Brooke: The forecasting numbers are solid but are still open for correction if needed.

d. Water Quality Updates

Liz Booth from GAEPD gave the Council an update on the water quality work being conducted in support of regional planning. Liz gave a brief overview of the programs she manages at EPD, and the overview of how the resource assessments are used in the water planning process.

Assimilative capacity assessment uses a variety of models and then incorporates numerous sources of available data. Models can be used to determine if an area/reach has limited or no assimilative capacity available now and/or what are future permitted needs. Models are calibrated and evaluated.

Ms. Booth discussed the information below.

- Overview of the models developed for the state, including the DOSag model, RIV1 model, GA Estuary Model, Watershed model, and the Lakes/Harbor model.
- The parameters of concern are particularly ammonia and biological oxygen demand
- Water quality standards in effect Such as dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll a (a measure of algae), nutrients, and temperature (related to heat loads from discharges).
- In North Georgia, many of the streams are designated as primary or secondary trout streams, which have standards for DO and temperature changes. Discussed temperature requirements for primary trout streams (no increase in temperature)
- Land use change – effects of land use, urbanization and impervious surfaces on base flow and during dry conditions, and higher peak storms resulting in flashy systems. Will take into account changes in low flows and higher peaks related to changes in land use in steady state and watershed models.
- Climate changes and the effects on water quality. Increases in drought years, and higher amounts of rainfall in wet years, resulted in more runoff. Average rainfall is steady, but frequency changes.
- Showed results of the current permitted models for available assimilative capacity.
- Presented results of the total P crossing state line Coosa River continues to decrease. DO and temperature levels at Coosa River at state line continue to improve. In 2020 list, Coosa River at state line was delisted for DO. Coosa River at state line is also meeting the daily mean temperature criteria.
- 2012 data show there are areas in Coosa River where data show PFAS and PFOA above health limits advisory 70 ng/l. in 2016, focus on Dalton Areas and Catoosa River. Multiple sites above the 70 ng/l. EPA collected additional sites in 2018. EPA collected data in 2019 to try to determine sources of PFOA. GAEPD initiated a targeted PFOS monitoring plan to monitor finished water at 110 public water systems that serve populations of 500 people or more (both groundwater and surface water). Work is ongoing. Can refer to a story map on EPD's website to see updated data as it is completed.
- Possible changes to future permits, increase in flows, possibly including tighter BOD, DO, TP and may see total nitrogen limits in permits in future. There may be new temperature limits, and there is a possibility that facilities may receive limits for emerging pollutants.

Liz Booth also discussed what is going on with the Triennial Review that GAEPD submits to USEPA. EPA approved compliance schedules. pH has been amended to natural limits to account for blackwater streams which have a lower natural pH.

Secondary contact requirement was not approved. Did not adopt Lake Oconee Lake Sinclair total P load – still working with EPA. Updates to criteria on several pesticides to better protect aquatic life. Updated human consumption guidelines. Looking at Aluminum criteria very carefully – kaolin soils in middle GA have very high levels of AL naturally. Cyanotoxins limits for recreation and swimming. Alert public when algae blooms are present when water is toxic. Dogs died from cyanotoxins. What to do if you see these, when in doubt, stay out – pea green water – not safe during cyanotoxin bloom. Lab is working on ramping up capability for sampling, will be implemented in 2022. Evaluating changes in designated uses from fishing to recreation or to drinking water. EPD developing a guidance document for what they need to change. Changing language to eliminate narrative criteria use of “legitimate” uses to “Designated” uses, since this is defined in GA regulations.

Question: Do you have a sense of where the PFOA data will lead us in Georgia?

Answer: Look at what other states are doing, what the numbers are being adopted. There are thousands of compounds known as “PFOAs” GA is looking at only two of them. They are moving very quickly with this. Estimate we will see something related to limits such as effluent limits, we would see limits and standards in the next 2-3 years.

5. Biosolids Issues and Updates

Mike Thomas, from GAWP gave the Council an update on the issues related to disposing biosolids from wastewater treatment process. Current challenges to landfilling biosolids. AG Dept. Soil Amendment rules, Solid Wastes Rule Changes, Public Concerns, and pollutants of concerns (PFAS). Disposal of biosolids to landfills has become more costly and difficult due to recent issues with slope instability in landfills.

Mr. Thomas discussed the information below.

- Biosolids have high nutrient and organic matter and do have agricultural value. Residuals related to drinking water processes (removal of solids) also have agricultural benefits. Increase pH and can bind phosphorus. May contain aluminum due to drinking water treatment processes.
- 2018 GAWP conducted a biosolids survey (just biosolids from wastewater). A GAWP task force collected survey data from 50+ communities and 99 facilities to investigate the issue. Most common was landfilling. Some land application and composting. Only city of Atlanta incinerates.
- New rules require facilities accepting high amounts of biosolids to evaluate engineering design elements and obtain a permit renewal if landfills are accepting biosolids. The cost to dispose of biosolids has increase 200 – 300%.

More utilities are looking at increasing land application. Permitted though NPDES program – wastewater permitting. Class A – very few limitations can be sold as fertilizer and compost. Class B – cannot be

stored on agricultural sites. Creates storage issues and weather-related concerns. Emerging contaminants like PFAs related to land application -- PFAS/PFOA and available land are a concern.

Residuals have even greater challenge. Classified as an “industrial waste” under solid waste rule. Ag department is reluctant to approve use of residuals as a soil amendment – can no longer use after 2021. Concern is presence of aluminum.

GEFA currently working on an updated survey and a review of current conditions and obstacles. Advanced drying can dry to <90% water, which offers many more alternatives for landfill disposal. However, this option is very expensive.

Still a lot of uncertainty related to disposal of residuals. EPD looking to permitting requirements for land application, and the safety and usefulness of the residuals as an agricultural product.

Incineration is also possible, but also come with fuel costs and air quality concerns.

6. Metro District Updates

Danny Johnson with the Metro District provided the Council with an update on the Metro District planning process and schedule. Metro District founded in 2001, so 20 years! Metro in 4th plan update. In last plan cycle, started coordinating on same cycle. Same general schedule, but a little behind related to forecasting data collection. On schedule to finish in 2022.

Technical resources will be developed to help support governments in the district with their master planning, including a guidance document on drought response and residential water demands. Looking forward to keeping communication going.

7. Georgia Wildlife Management Overview

Mr. Alan Isler presented information to the Council on the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Isler presented the information below.

- Overview of the Divisions located within the Department of Natural Resources such as EPD, State Parks and Historic Sites, Coastal Resources Division, Law Enforcement Division, and the Wildlife Resources Division.
- Goals of the Division include increasing participation in hunting, fishing and wildlife-based recreations and instill conservation values in the public. Carry forward the foundation of wildlife conservation through management and restoration of fish and wildlife and their habitats. Achieve excellence in conservation education and training.
- Number of hunters and anglers declining.
- Wildlife is in three sections: Game Management, Fisheries Management, and Wildlife Conservation.

- Game Management provides science-based management and conservation and protection of GA's wildlife and habitats for hunting, trapping and other wildlife related recreation and education. Includes managing wildlife management areas, forest management hunter education, private lands programs, urban wildlife and deer management.
- Provides more than 10,000 staff hours to respond to calls related to wildlife conflict, more than 45% deer related.
- 1.1 million acres of state-owned land. The type of tree, size of trees and density can affect quality of habitat.
- Expanding shooting sports firearm/archery ranges. Hunters are largest conservation group.
- Deer Management Assistance program – assistance to private landowners on how to manage for their deer herds.
- Legislation establishes framework for hunting regulations, but Board is ultimately responsible for setting rules and regulations.
- Regulations must meet 4 objectives: biologically appropriate and scientifically sound, responsive to public desires within biological appropriateness, strive for simplicity and flexibility, minimize challenges for recruitment, retention and reactivation (of conservation participation)

Question: When you look at harvest records, are things going well?

Answer: Concern is that doe harvest continues to go up each year. In recent years, decrease in number of bucks, and increase in doe harvest. You are to expect if that trend continues may see a response to that to ensure we maintain the correct buck – doe ration.

Question: Is it possible to break out approximate the public resources that WMA manages contribute to local economies?

Answer: Yes, did a study to break that information out on how hunting and fishing impacts their local economies. Will send to Brooke for distribution.

Question: We were trying to find info on feral hog population in different areas. Any comments or thoughts on that as an issue?

Answer: It is an issue. Hog populations are so dynamic. No way to get a good handle on how bad the population is in different area.

8. Comments from Non-Council Members, Visitors, or the General Public

Comment: Scott Baxton, Georgia Forestry Commission thanked Alan for his presentation. Relates back to the Wildlife Division Forest Management group. Whenever a harvest takes place, GFC works with them to make sure they adhere to forestry Best Management Practices.

9. Next Steps and Wrap Up

Brooke Anderson thanks to Jacobs and EPD for putting together meeting and presenting and supporting the water council. Presentations will be distributed and posted on website. Christine thanked all the presenters and thanked the Council members for participating After all the appointments are completed, we will reach out to set up orientation for new council members. Re-appointed members will be welcome to join as well. Discussed potential topics for next Council meeting and requested that email possible ideas be emailed to Jacobs, Brooke Anderson, or Christine Voudy. Brooke said the next CNG Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2021, hopefully in person.

10. Adjourn

Chairman Anderson thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:58 PM.

Coosa – North Georgia Water Planning Council, March 24, 2021

Council Members Present

1. Brooke Anderson
2. Mike Berg
3. Keith Coffey
4. Haynes Johnson
5. Gary McVey
6. Mike Thomas
7. John Bennett
8. Donald Anderson
9. Gregory Bowman
10. Jerry Crawford
11. Alex Sullivan
12. Allison Watters
13. Joel Hanner
14. Robert Goff

Elected Officials

1. None in attendance.

Partnering & Other State Agencies and Guests

1. Jullianne Meadows, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
2. Gretchen Lugthart, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
3. Scott Thackston, Georgia Forestry Commission
4. Cynthia Dunn
5. Alan Isler, Wildlife Resources Division
6. Erin Lincoln, Tetrattech
7. Clint Peacock, wildlife resources
8. Robert Endress, Wendel Companies
9. John Joiner

GA Environmental Protection Division

1. Liz Booth, EPD Program Manager
2. Jennifer Welte, EPD Project Manager
3. Christine Voudy, EPD Council Lead

Planning Contractors - Jacobs

1. Brian Skeens
2. Craig Hensley
3. Michelle Vincent
4. Veronica Jarrin