

Memorandum

To: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council

From: Shayne Wood and Rick Brown, CDM Smith

Date: June 12, 2017

*Subject: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 5
Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Process
Meeting Summary*

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council (Council) Meeting 5, held on June 5, 2017 at the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Chamber of Commerce in Fitzgerald, GA. This memorandum provides a summary of the major items discussed at the Suwannee-Satilla Council Meeting 5. The meeting began at 10:30 AM and followed the Council Meeting 5 Agenda.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Council Chairman Scott Downing opened the meeting, welcomed Council Members and guest. CDM Smith, the Planning Contractor (PC) provided an outline of the topics that would be covered during the Council Meeting. The Council approved the Meeting Agenda (motion Mike Edgy; second by Dan Raines) and the Council Meeting 4 Meeting Summary (motion by Mike Edgy; second by Rusty McCall).

2) Review of Public Comment and Overview of Draft Final Regional Water Plan

The PC began this agenda item by highlighting the major accomplishments completed by Council during the Regional Water Plan review and revision process. The PC noted some of the changes to the Water Demand Forecast and explained how the water demand changes impacted projected potential gaps, and some changes to the Council Memorandum of Agreement and Rules for Meetings including defining a quorum based on active member participation.

The PC also mentioned that at the end of today's meeting we will be discussing next steps in the meeting process and asked Council to think about any ideas or changes they might want to suggest for the next round of planning.

Question/Comment: A CM indicated that the Joint Meetings were good in that they involved six of the eastern Councils, but the additional travel time probably resulted in lower attendance. The CM also suggested that more time be devoted to questions and answers during the Resource Assessment presentations.

The PC continued and noted that the review and revision process also included updating several Supplemental Materials; both the Demand Forecast Technical Memorandum (TM) that Council

has approved and the Gap TM have been updated. The Gap TM will be provided to Council in the next month or so.

3) Public Comments/Local Official Comments

The PC noted that overall there were not a significant number of comments on the regional water plans and no comments were received on the Suwannee-Satilla Plan.

Question/Comment: Chairman Downing indicated that he is not surprised by this because there were not a lot of substantive changes to the plan, and for many people the document is very complex. He also noted that there has been good public involvement in the process, so there were really no surprises or unexpected conclusions.

Question/Comment: Cliff Lewis, Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) mentioned that he did get a call from the Satilla Riverkeeper and that she is interested in learning more about the water planning process and the Council.

Question/Comment: Cliff Lewis, Georgia EPD mentioned that while there were no formal comments on the Suwannee-Satilla Plan, he has been involved in several changes that will likely need to be considered in the next plan update/interim planning period. Mr. Lewis mentioned that the combining of the Agricultural Meeting and Permitting Programs will involve some staffing and implementation changes. For example, going forward there will be more focus on withdrawal of water, not application, more emphasis on getting working meters in the correct location, and compliance with the metering program.

Question/Comment: A CM asked if telemetry will be used in the future, and will EPD try to make the process as efficient as possible.

Answer: Possibly this will be in part up to what farmers are planning to do, and the amount of budget and staff support available. EPD will work closely with water users to make the process as efficient as possible and to gather as much data as feasible so that we can improve forecasting, gap analysis, and compliance with the program.

Question/Comment: A CM noted that he is observing a trend of small farming/specialty crop operations in his county. He suggested that more education may be needed for new operators who may not be familiar with metering and reporting requirements.

Question/Comment: Several Council Members commented on the importance of continuing to work with and understand challenges that are facing Florida. Several Council Members feel that Florida is looking to Georgia for help because of some of the challenges they are facing with a growing population and water quality issues.

Question/Comment: A CM noted that he hopes we will continue to look more holistically at water and growth and try to be more strategic in having economic development in areas where there are more reliable/abundant water supplies.

4) Council Vote for Adoption of the Regional Water Plan

The PC then asked Council if they had any further questions or comments prior to proceeding with a vote on the updated Regional Water Plan. There were no additional questions and Chairman Downing asked for a motion. Dan Raines moved approval of the updated Regional Water Plan; the motion was seconded by Mike Edgy, and the Plan was approved unanimously by all Council Members present. The PC noted that we have received three additional votes for approval of the plan via email.

5) Clean Water Act, Section 319(h) Grant Update

The PC asked Mr. Eugene Dyal, Suwannee- Satilla Council Member, and Coordinator Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) for an update on the Council's 319(h) project. Mr. Dyal gave a short overview of the location of the project, which is on 17 Mile River/Creek near Douglas, and explained that the monitoring locations for sampling have been identified. Mr. Dyal noted that the main land use in the subject watershed is a combination of farming, timber, poultry and urban/rural. Mr. Dyal also mentioned that they are organizing a river cleanup day in September.

6) Next Steps/Wrap Up

The PC invited Mr. Cliff Lewis, Georgia EPD to provide Council with an overview of the next steps in the water planning process. Mr. Lewis began by thanking Council for all the work they have done in Round 1 of the plan development and during this review and revision process. Mr. Lewis noted that EPD is still working on some of the more specific details, but the current thinking is to support Council in the following ways:

- Work with Council to schedule the next meeting, probably in the September timeframe, and provide contractor support of Council meetings.
- Provide ongoing contractor support to develop education materials such as PPT presentations, fact sheets, and other information summaries such as brochures.
- Provide the above material and support Council in helping engage and communicate with implementation entities and the public.
- Provide opportunities for Joint Council coordination.
- Provide the opportunity for additional subcommittee meeting to look more closely at specific topics of interest similar to the surface and groundwater subcommittees that were held earlier this year.
- Work with the Chair to facilitate reappointment of new Council Members while maintaining some of the existing members and expertise.

Question/Comment: A CM suggested that it is important to get Council Members that will be able to actively participate in the meeting. It was also suggested that reaching out to younger farmers would be valuable for exchanging information and for possible participation on Council.

Question/Comment: A CM emphasized that it is important to make sure potential Council Members understand the level of commitment to be on Council and suggested that it would be good to have a balance of diverse interest as well as elected officials.

The meeting concluded with a short expression of thanks to the Council from Shayne Wood and Rick Brown, CDM Smith, Altamaha Planning Contractors.

7) Meeting Attendance

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council members in attendance:

- Scott Downing, Dan Raines, Mike Edgy, Eugene Dyal, Carroll Coarsey, and Rusty McCall.

Georgia EPD Representative in attendance:

- Cliff Lewis

Regional Water Planning Council contractors in attendance:

- Shayne Wood and Rick Brown, CDM Smith

Public/Agency attendees:

- Jim Page, Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Fisheries