

Memorandum

To: Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council
From: Laura Hartt, Jacobs & Ashley Reid, CDM Smith
Date: October 29, 2020
Subject: Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council Virtual (Zoom)
Meeting Summary

Roll Call, Welcome, Introductions

Chairman Bruce Azevedo called the virtual meeting to order. Contractors verified participant names and affiliations.

Brendan Thompson noted that power was out in Rabun County, so he would not be able to stay on for the meeting. He asked the Chairman to provide him an update on Council appointments.

Council member Dan Fowler mentioned that he would like to step down from the Council and suggested that Chris Dillard (Jefferson Energy Cooperative) replace him.

Contractor Ashley Reid (CDM Smith) welcomed the attendees and handed the meeting off to Chairman Azevedo. The Chairman asked for a roll call and received affirmation from Council members

- Braye Boardman
- Jerry Boling
- Dan Fowler
- Pat Goran
- Stephen King (acting as proxy for Suzanne Sharkey)
- Chris McCorkle

Council Business

Chairman Azevedo called for a motion to approve the prior Savannah-Upper Ogeechee (SUO) Council Meeting Minutes (June 4, 2020). Minutes were approved by motion, second, and unanimous vote.

Chairman Azevedo then called for a motion to approve the draft agenda. Agenda was approved by motion, second, and unanimous vote.

Chairman Azevedo asked the Council to send suggestions for future meeting topics to him.

Special Words from the Chair

Chairman Azevedo then called for a moment of silence, for attendees to remember Vice-Chair Tom Wiedmeier, who had passed away late summer 2020. The Chairman then read the letter

prepared by EPD, honoring Mr. Wiedmeier for his service on the Council and honorary plaque to be provided to . I

GA EPD Updates—Seed Grants and other Funding

Haydn Blaize (EPD) gave the Council an update on three active Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grants:

- Biota Improvement in an Urban Stream through Aquatic Habitat Restoration (City of Augusta, 2018-2020)
- Stekoa Creek WMP Implementation Project (Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, 2017-21)
- Stormwater BMP Installation and Performance Comparison (City of Augusta, 2020-2023)

Mr. Blaize next provided an update on three active Seed Grants:

- Initiating and Upgrading Publicly Accessible Water Monitoring for the SUO and Coastal RWPs (City of Augusta/Savannah Riverkeeper, 2019-2021)
- Historical Analysis of In-stream Water Quantities for the Ogeechee, Savannah, Altamaha and Oconee River Basins (University of Georgia, 2020-2022)
- High Frequency Monitoring and the Effects of Agricultural Water Withdrawals in the Savannah Upper Ogeechee Watersheds (City of Augusts, 2020-2022)

Mr. Blaize also reminded the Council that pre-application meetings should be scheduled no later than October 16, 2020, with final applications due October 31, 2020.

GA EPD Updates—Municipal Forecasting Efforts

Ms. Welte summarized the status for ongoing forecasting efforts as follows:

- Municipal Water Demand – Two stakeholder meetings were convened (April 16 and June 3, 2020). Following stakeholder input, Contractors (Black & Veatch) have finalized the draft for public comment. The next stakeholder meeting will commence February 2021, to review public comments and address any outstanding Council concerns before finalizing the forecasts. Ms. Welte noted that certain municipally-supplied industries (those using 0.2 mgd or more from a municipal system) will be addressed through the Industrial Forecasting effort
- Industrial – Initial stakeholder meeting was convened (June 3), including representatives from the manufacturing, poultry processing, pulp and paper, and mining sectors.
- Energy – Initial stakeholder meeting was convened (April 29), including representatives from power production entities.
- Agriculture – Albany State University and the University of Georgia are developing these forecasts.

Ms. Welte then provided more details regarding the Municipal Water Demands forecasting efforts. She summarized the information given to the Council representatives during the April and June stakeholder meetings and reminded the Council that their Chair-appointed representative is Hunter Bicknell. She also noted feedback received to date from Council members concerning Augusta, Elberton, Louisville, and Hart County.

Ms. Welte noted that the need to address municipally-supplied industries prolonged the timeline for completion because the industrial forecasts were still in development.

Ms. Welte noted that some counties had experienced significant shifts in demands compared to the demands from the 2017 plan update. She invited the Council to provide further input prior and during the upcoming public comment period.

Ms. Welte noted the challenges in forecasting future self-supplied water demands in order to determine groundwater availability. Currently, the percentage of the population relying on self-supplied sources within each county will remain constant into the future, unless individual counties provide more up to date information.

Chairman Azevedo noted that Madison County acquires water from Elbert County and asked EPD to ensure that in situations where one county serves another county that demands are apportioned accordingly and then projected based on the receiving county's population growth. Ms. Welte confirmed that such transfers between municipal water systems were being tracked and accounted for in the municipal forecasting efforts.

Contractor Brian Skeens (Jacobs) indicated that per capita water use is calculated using data pulled from the water loss audits, which are submitted to the state annually. If no water loss audit data is available, then the Contractors use water production and customers served to calculate per capita water use.

The Chairman noted that the projects previewed run through 2060, but the plan horizon is 2050. He asked if the time horizon would be adjusted. Ms. Welte indicated that it would be. Ms. Welte summarized the change in municipal water demands, as reflected in the draft municipal forecast, for the SUO region as follows:

	2019	2060
Surface water	71.9 MGD	73.6 MGD
Groundwater	11.9 MGD	19.4 MGD

Ms. Welte also provided details concerning the wastewater demands and forecasting. Georgia Department of Public Health data through 2018 was used to determine the percent of septic users in most counties. For those instances where 2018 data was unavailable, contractors relied

on the 1990 U.S. Census data for housing characteristics. Similar to self-supplied water demands, the percentage of the population relying on septic systems within each county will remain constant into the future, unless individual counties provide more up to date information. Ms. Welte requested additional input on septic use from Council members.

For municipally-treated wastewater, 2019 average annual wastewater discharges as reported to EPD were used, including both point source discharges and land application systems (LAS). Ms. Welte summarized the change in municipal wastewater demands for the SUO region, as reflected in the draft municipal forecast, as follows:

2019

Point source discharges	61.9 MGD
Land application systems	1.8 MGD

2060

Total wastewater flow:	64.9 MGD
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Seed Grant Project Updates/Updates to Website

Tonya Bonitatibus (Savannah Riverkeeper) provided the Council with an update on the City of Augusta’s 2019-20 Seed Grant project. The grant is funding the development of a website and app to serve as repositories for current and historical water monitoring data in the Ogeechee and Savannah river basins. An electronic survey was circulated to Council members subsequent to the meeting to solicit further feedback on layout and content.

Ms. Bonitatibus provided the Council with a demonstration of the future website’s content and features (www.knowyourriver.com). She also provided an overview of the GIS app. Both the website and the app are due to roll out late 2020/early 2021. Ms. Bonitatibus asked the Council for their input on additional data layers or other improvements they would like to see incorporated. She then stated that they have applied for another Seed Grant to support the addition of groundwater and rainwater data. The next phase also would add Survey123 capability, allowing batch uploads of survey data, and the publication of a user’s manual to allow the project to be replicated in other basins.

The Chairman thanks Ms. Bonitatibus for her presentation and ongoing efforts to make data more accessible.

Metro North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) Updates

Danny Johnson (Metro North Georgia Water Planning District) provided the Council with an update on the District’s planning process, including the plan update timeline. Mr. Johnson noted that the District is targeting December 2022 for completion. Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Welte if extending the timeline from June to December would be an issue for the regional councils. Ms. Welte responded that while a specific month has not been set for completion of

the next round of regional water plan updates, EPD would coordinate with the District to ensure that the planning processes are integrated with regard to schedule.

Mr. Johnson also presenting the results of a statewide survey on biosolids management in the state. Within the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Basin, he noted that approximately 65% of biosolid disposal occurs by land fill, 16% by land application, and 8% by composting.

Mr. Johnson then outlined future trends in biosolids management, indicating that regulatory pressure will continue with respect to landfilling. He also indicated that while land application remains an option, there are public perception concerns, water contamination (PFAS, PFOA) concerns, and land availability constraints. Incineration involves air quality, cost, and ash disposal issues. Consequently, Mr. Johnson anticipates that advanced drying technology may become more cost-effective and offer beneficial reuse options. He also indicated that regional solutions (e.g., regional composting) and GEFA funding for regional approaches are being considered.

Energy and Industrial Demand Forecasting Updates

Contractor Bill Davis (CDM Smith) provided the Council with an update on the energy and industrial forecasting efforts for the 10 Georgia water planning regions. He began this portion of the meeting by recognizing the energy water demand stakeholder group and participating partners, and how their feedback is gathered and incorporated. Mr. Davis provided a thorough explanation of the energy forecasting methodology and provided an overview of the project milestones. At this point in time, the energy stakeholder group has reviewed the draft report and their comments have been addressed. Mr. Davis wrapped the energy forecast discussion with a presentation of the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee energy forecasts (withdrawals and consumption) from 2020 through 2060. Both water withdrawals and water consumption are expected to almost double between 2020 and 2030 as Plant Vogtle Units 3 & 4 come on-line. From 2030 to 2060 the expected increase in water withdrawals and consumption is negligible.

Following the energy forecast discussion, Mr. Davis provided updates on the industrial forecasting efforts. He recognized the participating stakeholders and explained that more focused stakeholder groups had been established according to the major industrial sub-sectors of manufacturing, mining, pulp and paper, and poultry processing, in order to develop or more reasonable forecast methodology. A technical memo has been prepared for and reviewed by each industrial sub-sector with water demands and discharges by county, and the four subsector technical memos are being integrated into a single industrial forecast report for all the industrial stakeholders to review. The industrial water demand forecast with water withdrawals and water discharges by county should be available in December.

Agricultural Water Use and Demand

Mark Masters (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center) gave the Council an update on the agricultural water use demands and forecasts. The Center relied on 2020 wetted acreage data based on field observations and aerial surveys. Crop projections were modeled using multiple data sets, including remote sensing, field data, and various state, regional, and federal models. Crop water needs were determined for wet, normal, and dry years, relying primarily on irrigation meter data. Agricultural demand forecasting efforts are ongoing.

Public Comments

Chairman Azevedo asked if there were any public comments. There were none. He then called on Robert Farris (Georgia Forestry Foundation) to update the Council on his Foundation's activities.

Mr. Farris provided the Council with an overview of the Foundation's efforts to conserve working forests. He noted the projected loss of 23 million acres across the southeast by 2060. He further noted that Georgia leads the nation in privately owned, commercial forests, with 22 million acres. The Foundation is exploring several tools for conserving forest acreage, including promotion of conservation easements and targeted landowner outreach.

Wrap Up

Chairman Azevedo thanked the attendees for their participation and recommended either the third or fourth week of February 2021 for the next Council meeting, to be held virtually on the Zoom platform. The Chairman again asked Council members to email agenda topics to either him or the contractors.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12 pm.

Meeting Participants

Council

- Bruce Azevedo (Chair)
- Braye Boardman
- Jerry Boling
- Dan Fowler
- Pat Goran
- Stephen King (proxy for Suzanne Sharkey)
- Chris McCorkle

Council participants

- Tonya Bonitatibus (Savannah Riverkeeper)
- Wes Byne (The Constantine Group)
- Oscar Flite (City of Augusta)

- Brendan Thompson (Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority)

EPD

- Haydn Blaze
- Jennifer Welte

Contractors

- Ashley Reid
- Bill Davis
- Michelle Vincent
- Laura Hartt
- Brian Skeens

Public

- Nancy Bobbitt (Senator Kelly Loeffler's office)
- Sam Booher (Sierra Club)
- Frank Carl (Savannah Riverkeeper/Sierra Club)
- Chris Dillard (Jefferson Energy Cooperative)
- Gail Cowie (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center)
- Robert Farris (Georgia Forestry Foundation)
- Gina Hutchinson
- Mark Inbusch (International Paper)
- Danny Johnson (Metro North Georgia Water Planning District)
- Mark Masters (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center)
- Matthew Mrizek (Georgia Forestry Commission)
- Ritchie Mullen
- Heather Nix (Clemson University)
- Michelle Stephens
- Meron Wolde-Tensae (Hazen & Sawyer)