

## Memorandum

*To: Savannah – Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council*

*From: Katherine Atteberry and Andrew Jarrett, Jacobs*

*Date: December 23, 2016*

*Subject: Savannah – Upper Ogeechee Council Meeting 3  
Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Process  
Meeting Summary*

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Savannah – Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 3, held on November 17, 2016 at the Oconee Fall Line Technical College in Dublin, Georgia. A Joint Council Meeting was held for the six eastern Regional Water Planning (RWP) Councils (Altamaha, Coastal Georgia, Middle Ocmulgee, Suwannee-Satilla, Savannah- Upper Ogeechee and Upper Oconee) from 10 AM to 4 PM. The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee (SUO) RWP Council held a brief individual Council Meeting during the afternoon portion of the Joint Council Meeting. This memorandum provides a summary of the items discussed at the individual Council Meeting that was held from approximately 1:15 PM to 2:30 PM.

### Discussion

#### *Breakout Session Debrief*

Council Chairman Cross observed that SUO has no projected surface water availability shortfalls according to the updated resource assessment information. He also shared with the group that he had spoken with the Coastal RWP Council Chairman Thompson about inter-council coordination and issues the Coastal Council has identified with regard to the potential gaps identified in the surface water availability resource assessment modeling in the Ogeechee basin. The majority of surface water use in that basin is related to agriculture. There was discussion about whether and how SUO could update best management practices to be a good neighbor to the Coastal RWP Council.

There was also discussion regarding a large permit that an entity named Magruder has on the Ogeechee River for surface water withdrawal that could impact the potential gaps in surface water availability identified in the Coastal RWP Council area, depending on how the resource assessment models accounted for that permit. EPD is currently tracking down additional information about this permit holder, and the Planning Contractor will provide additional information to the Council during the forthcoming office hours call.

Council Member Webster reiterated his comment that he would like the most relevant modeling data used when modeling for the SUO region. He expressed concern about how comparable data from a data point in Southwest Georgia is to the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Region, stating that the two are very different regions. He would like to see data from the Southeast Georgia

experiment station used in the modeling efforts, as that data would potentially provide a more relevant picture for the SUO region. He felt that experiment station on the eastern side of the state, which is already in place, should be used to collect more relevant data.

Additional questions were raised during the discussions:

- Question about availability of new permits to pull water from the Ogeechee River (is it banned)?
- Is data available showing the actual flow of the Ogeechee River from 1960 onward in order to show increase or decrease?
- Is there enough groundwater to cover surface water shortfalls for the lower Ogeechee River basin?

The planning contractor will provide additional information to the Council concerning these questions during the forthcoming office hours call with the Council.

#### ***Management Practices Identified for Review and Revision***

The Planning Contractor distributed handouts outlining the Round 1 management practices for review as well as a document titled, *Five Year Review and Revision Cycle*, requesting additional information or remaining questions related to the Council.

The following are questions in the *Five Year Review and Revision Cycle* document that the Council identified as most important to answer before finalizing their review of the SUO Best Management Practices.

- Is there a summary of water loss audits for the Region?
- What progress has been made in the COMP II Study? What is the timeframe for its completion? How will it impact the Regional Water Plan?
- With the knowledge that it is a process to be undertaken by the Corps of Engineers, when will a re-allocation study of the reservoirs be conducted? How might that impact the Regional Water Plan?
- What are the projected withdrawals and returns associated with the Plant Vogtle expansion? How does that impact the current Regional Water Plan?
- How does the oxygen injection system to be installed at Plant Vogtle impact water quality?
  - A new question was added to this item during the meeting: Where is the oxygen injection system physically located at Plant Vogtle (at the facility or down in the harbor)?
- How is the deepening of the Savannah Harbor going to impact this Region? What are the predicted impacts? Will there be any alterations to flows from upstream areas? How might this impact water quantity and quality?
  - A new issue was raised to this item during the meeting: Since Savannah Harbor questions are largely governed by the Corps of Engineers plan to

release water, could there be a confirmation whether anything will affect upstream enough to cause more restrictions than TMDLs/5R? How about the impacts in terms of mitigation for the fish passage at Savannah Bluff?

- What analysis is available on the economic impacts of reservoir drawdowns (recreation and tourism impacts in particular)?
- A new question was added during the meeting: The Corps has proposed to install Oxbows to raise dissolved oxygen and add 47 miles to the river. If this does not work, is there a contingency plan? Will that require SUO to do more? There was a request for an update from the GA EPD/ Corps of Engineers to learn more about this proposal and learn about the potential for implementation.
- How should or can the Council integrate the Savannah River Clean Water Fund and its nutrient trading program into its Regional Water Planning? A new question was added to this item during the meeting: What is the EPA schedule for developing nutrient limits?

The planning contractor stated that they would work to answer the questions identified above before Council Meeting 4 (CM4), so that the SUO would have the information they needed to update their Management Practices during that meeting. New information would be provided to the Council approximately two to three weeks before CM4 and an office hours meeting will be offered to answer questions on the materials approximately one week prior to CM4.

#### ***Council Coordination Recommendation***

The planning contractor distributed *Recommendations for Enhancing Inter-Council Planning* that was developed during the interim review period.

#### ***Report Back at the afternoon Joint Council Session***

Council Chairman Cross asked Council Member Wiedmeier to speak on behalf of the SUO Council during the afternoon portion of the Joint Council Meeting.

#### **Council Meeting Business**

##### ***319(h) Grant Project Update/Seed Grant Updates***

Chairman Cross was asked to provide a letter of support for a grant to study two creeks in lower Richmond County. He heard some reservation from the agricultural community who are asking that the study group meet with stakeholders if they identify any issues. Chairman Cross will include this request from the agricultural community in his letter of support.

##### ***Approve meeting minutes from June 23, 2016 Council Meeting***

There was a motion and a second from the Council to approve the CM2 Meeting Summary. Chairman Cross called for a vote, the vote was unanimous and the summary was approved.

### **Public Comment Period**

There were no comments from the public.

### **Meeting Attendance**

#### SUO Regional Water Council members in attendance:

- Ron C. Cross, Chairman
- Dan T. Fowler
- Thomas C. Jordan
- Scott P. MacGregor
- R. Lee Webster
- Tom Wiedmeier

#### Georgia EPD Representatives in attendance:

- Becky Champion
- Veronica Craw

#### Regional Water Planning Council contractors in attendance from Jacobs Engineering:

- Katherine Atteberry
- Andrew Jarrett