

# Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting

June 6, 2023



**GEORGIA  
WATER PLANNING**

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# Welcome and Opening Remarks

Council Chair, Bruce Azevedo

# Council Business

Council Chair, Bruce Azevedo

Approve today's meeting agenda

Approve March 23, 2023, meeting summary



# Georgia's State Water Plan

Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Council  
Draft Agenda - March 23, 2023  
1:00 pm

[Click here to join the meeting virtually](#)

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Council Registration/Guest Sign In <i>Ashley Reid and Michelle Vincent</i>
1:00 – 1:05 p.m.	Welcome, <i>SUO Council Chairman Azevedo</i>
1:05 – 1:10 p.m.	Council Business, <i>SUO Chairman Azevedo</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve March 23, 2023, draft Council Meeting Summary</li><li>• Approve today's draft meeting agenda</li></ul>
1:10 – 1:20 p.m.	EPD Updates – <i>Haydn Blaize, Georgia EPD</i>
1:20 – 1:40 p.m.	Review Draft Plan Comments Received

#### 5 MINUTE STRETCH BREAK

1:45 – 2:15 p.m.	Review and Discuss Drafted Responses to Comments
2:15 – 2:30 p.m.	Next Steps/Public Comments /Local Elected Official Comments
2:30 p.m.	Adjourn

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## Memorandum

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

**From:** Ashley Reid, CDM Smith and Lina Yazbak, Jacobs

**Date:** March 23, 2023

**Subject:** Draft Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting Summary (Subject to Council review and approval)

## Welcome, Introductions, and Council Business

Chairman Bruce Azevedo called the meeting to order and then called for a motion to approve the prior Savannah-Upper Ogeechee (SUO) Council Meeting Minutes (November 2022). Minor corrections to minutes noted and will be addressed prior to the finalizing. Minutes (as corrected) were approved by motion, second, and unanimous vote.

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

## EPD Updates

### Planning Schedule Updates

Haydn Blaize, EPD reviewed the draft and final regional water plans schedule with the Council, noting the following:

- Councils are to submit drafts of the revised plans to EPD by Wednesday, March 29, 2023
- Draft plans will be put on Public Notice by EPD on March 31, 2023, and the 45-day public comment period will end on May 15, 2023.
- Councils are to review/incorporate public comments received during their June 2023 meetings.
- Councils are to submit final revised regional water plans to EPD by Friday, June 23, 2023, and EPD Director is planned to adopt plans by June 30, 2023.

## Recent and Upcoming EPD Activities

Haydn Blaize, EPD provided the Council with additional EPD updates and dates to remember. He noted that the EPD finalized a Water Quality Trading Guidance document on February 7, 2023. It is available on EPD's website. Mr. Blaize also reminded listeners that lead service line inventories for public water systems were due October 2024. He noted that EPD and GEFA would be implementing line systems to accept and track submissions. Mr. Blaize concluded this discussion by noting that instruction stormwater permits would be reissued this summer (2023).

## FY2023 Section 319(h) Grant Funding

Mr. Blaize informed meeting attendees that the Georgia Environmental Protection Division Watershed Protection Branch Nonpoint Source Program were now accepting applications for FY2023 Section 319(h) grant funding. Application period is set to close April 30, 2023. He noted that eligible projects should:

03.23.2023 meeting summary\_draft



# Georgia EPD Updates

*Haydn Blaize, GA EPD*

# Draft and Final Regional Water Plans

- Council submits Draft Updated Plan to EPD by Wednesday, March 29
- Draft Updated Plan will be put on Public Notice by EPD on March 31
- 45-day public comment period will end on May 15, 2023
- Council reviews/incorporates public comments received during their June meetings
- Final Updated Plan should be submitted to EPD by Friday, June 23
- EPD Director adopts plans by June 30, 2023

# Regional Water Plan Resource Assessments

## Surface Water Supply Potential Challenges

Entity	Resource Assessment Surface Water Supply Challenges	
	BEAM Node	Permit No.
1 City of Toccoa	1225	127-0102-02
2 City of Royston	1785	059-0103-01
3 Banks County Board of Commissioners	1825	006-0106-05
4 City of Crawford	2005	109-0105-01
5 Thomson McDuffie County Water and Sewer Commission	2005	097-0111-03
6 KaMin LLC	4105	149-0111-02
7 KaMin LLC	4125	081-0111-01

# Regional Water Plan Resource Assessments

## Wastewater Assimilation Potential Challenges

Entity		Resource Assessment Surface Water Wastewater Assimilation Challenges	
		BEAM Node	Permit No.
1	City of Clayton (Clayton WPCP)	1128	GA0020923
2	City of Toccoa (Eastanollee Creek WPCP)	1248	GA0021814
3	City of Lavonia (Lavonia WPCP)	1708	GA0038661
4	Banks County Board of Commissioners (Hudson River WPCP)	1858	GA0050215
5	City of Elberton (Falling Creek WPCP)	1978	GA0025682
6	Columbia County (Kiokee Creek WPCP)	3048	GA0038342
7	PCS Nitrogen Fertilizer, L.P. (Augusta)	3478	GA0002071
8	City of Augusta (Spirit Creek WPCP)	3698	GS0047147
9	City of Thomson (Thomson WPCP)	4058	GA0020974
10	City of Wrens (Wrens WPCP)	4158	GA0021857
11	City of Waynesboro (Brier WPCP)	4228	GA0038466
12	City of Sardis (Sardis WPCP)	4268	GA0020893
13	City of Sylvania (Sylvania WPCP)	4318	GA0021385



# SEED GRANTS

## Current Seed Grant Projects

CURRENT SEED GRANT PROJECTS					
FISCAI YEAR	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LEAD PARTNER	Amount	AWARDED	PROJECTED COMPLETION
2020	High Frequency Monitoring and the Effects of Agricultural Water Withdrawal in the Savannah Upper Ogeechee Watersheds	City of Augusta	\$47,820	4/1/2020	9/30/2023
2021	Upgrading Publicly Accessible Water Monitoring for the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee RWP	City of Savannah	\$75,000	9/1/2021	8/31/2023
2022	Effect of water quantity on the instream function of the Savannah River	University of Georgia	\$75,000	4/1/2022	9/30/2024
2022	Pilot study to preserve in-stream water quality and instream flows below an urban pond complex using a real-time control system	City of Augusta	\$75,000	9/13/2022	10/31/2024



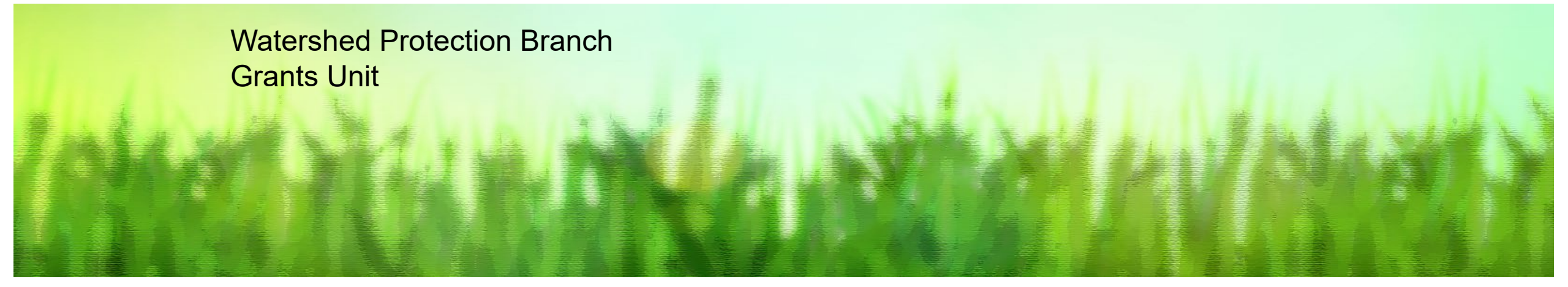
**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

**SFY2024  
Regional Water  
Planning  
SEED GRANT**

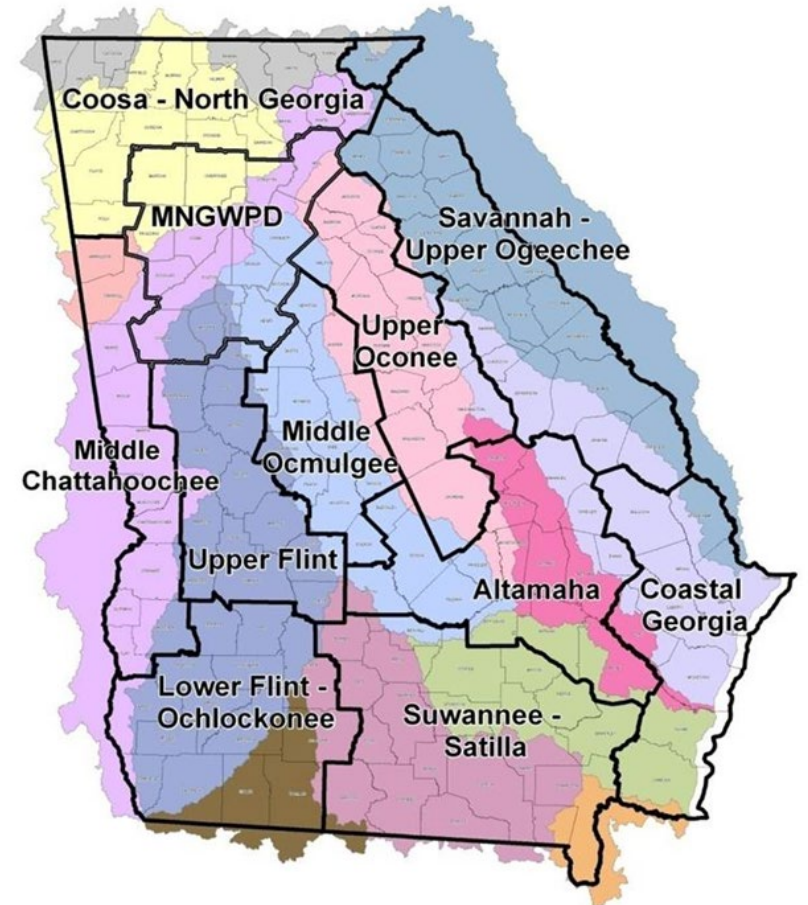


Watershed Protection Branch  
Grants Unit



# Regional Water Plan Seed Grant

- Up to \$75,000 per project to implement Regional Water Plans
- Cost-Share: 60% state funds/40% local match (10% of project total as cash)
- Letter of Support from Water Council
- Scheduling required pre-application meetings will be due in Mid October
- Accepting applications for SFY2024 until **October 31, 2023**
- **NEW for SFY2023:** Must apply using online Grant Application Portal



<https://epd.georgia.gov/regional-water-plan-seed-grant-funds>



# Online Application Instructions

## New for SFY2024

All applications must be submitted through the RWP Seed Grant Application Portal

1. Create an Account
2. Create an Organization Profile
3. Complete Application Section 1: Project Description
4. Complete Application Section 2: Project Budget
5. **SUBMIT** all sections and supporting attachments in the portal by **OCTOBER 31, 2023**.

To inquire about potential projects or to schedule a pre-application meeting, contact Joyce McClain at [joyce.mcclain@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:joyce.mcclain@dnr.ga.gov) or 470-251-2761.

The screenshot shows the user interface of the RWP Seed Grant Application Portal. At the top, there is a header for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads "Regional Water Planning Seed Grant > City of Happy | Trash Free Waters Education". A user login area shows "Welcome, joyhinkle5@gmail.com". The main content area is titled "City of Happy | Trash Free Waters Education" and includes a "Submit" button. Below this, there are two application sections: "Application Section 1: Project Description" and "Application Section 2: Budget". Each section has a "Complete" status and an "Edit" button. A "wizehive" logo is visible at the bottom of the page.




# Review Draft Plan Comments Received

*Ashley Reid, CDM Smith*


# Draft Plan Public Comments Received

- Comments received from:

- Dr. Amy Rosemond, Distinguished Research Professor, University of Georgia
- United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service



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Odum School of Ecology



United States Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Georgia Ecological Services  
Email: [GAES\\_Assistance@FWS.gov](mailto:GAES_Assistance@FWS.gov)  
Website: [FWS.gov/office/Georgia-Ecological-Services/](http://FWS.gov/office/Georgia-Ecological-Services/)

North Georgia Office 355 East Hancock Ave, Room 320, Box 7 Athens, GA 30601 Phone: (706) 613-9493	West Georgia Office P.O. Box 52560 Fort Moore, GA 31995-2560 Phone: (706) 544-6030 Fax: (706) 544-6419	Coastal Georgia Office 4980 Wildlife Drive NE Townsend, GA 31331 Phone: (912) 832-8739
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**To:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Re:** Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Plan  
**From:** Dr. Amy Rosemond, Distinguished Research Professor, University of Georgia  
**cc:** Governor Brian Kemp (sent via hard copy to the State Capitol) and Burt Jones (sent via email form on the Lieutenant Governor website via email)  
**Date:** May 14, 2023

Dear Georgia Department of Natural Resources colleagues, and Governor Jones, and Speaker Burns:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft update to our state. I was asked to serve on Georgia's State Water Plan Scientific Advisory Panel in 2008. I applauded the work of Georgia's Environmental Protection Agency (EPD) in creating a state water plan, to assess the status of water resources and to continuously improve this process. Ideally, the implementation of the plan will promote wise use of water and make sure that our streams, rivers, and wetlands for generations of Georgians.

In my review of the recent draft Regional State Water Plan, I noted several implementation of the State Water Plan, which will likely result in increased water shortages and water pollution issues in the future. In addition, the plan below do not protect the health and functioning of freshwater systems, the most familiar with the Upper Oconee Regional Plan because I have lived there. But all of the Regional Water Plans have much in common, namely, they do not address persons with largely business interests to the Regional Planning Councils that are not dealt with adequately in the current plans, and C) the lack of attention between monitoring of aquatic systems and management to protect them for future generations. I agree strongly with the recommendation in the draft plan that EPD should consider institutionalizing regional planning to address that way, EPD can set benchmarks, monitor progress, and determine if management practices are adequate for protecting long-term access to water. This job needs to be taken on by GA EPD, with more funding and resources.

Regarding the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Plan:

**A. Who are in positions to make decisions about Georgia's water resources?** I am concerned about the representation on the Regional Water Councils, which do not include a representative of the state of Georgia and those who depend on water for their freshwater ecosystems. I have reviewed the names of a few people on the Regional Water Councils. I have found that many appointed council members have interests in the use of water and do not represent the vast diversity of Georgians to water and unpolluted water bodies. In addition, I haven't been

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May 17, 2023

State of Georgia Water Planning Division  
Regional Water Planning Councils  
Via [water\\_planning@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:water_planning@dnr.ga.gov)

Re: Comments on Draft Updated Regional Water Plans

Dear Regional Water Planning Councils:

Thank you for the opportunity to review State of Georgia Water Planning Division's Draft Regional Water Plans, updated in March 2023. We submit the following comments under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*).

**General Comments on all 10 Regional Water Plans:**

Along with the State of Georgia Water Planning Division, we share your endeavor that all Georgians have the right to enjoy safe and sustainable water resources, while safeguarding our rivers and natural ecosystems for generations to come. By function of this letter, we invite the Regional Water Planning Councils to include our agency into your water planning efforts so that we may assist with development of projects that consider effects to natural habitats, threatened and endangered species, and other fish and wildlife resources.

- We recommend Regional Water Plans address the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) High Priority Habitats, High Priority Species, and High Priority Conservation Actions within each area thoroughly and uniformly.
- All Plans should contain up-to-date numbers of species of Conservation Concern tracked by the Georgia Natural Heritage Program. For example, within the 16-county area of the Altamaha Water Plan, there are 202 Georgia Biotics tracked plants and animals, 65 Georgia Protected plants and animals, 12 tracked natural communities, and seven tracked mollusks. A list of the species for each of the Regional Plan areas can be obtained through the Environmental Review, Wildlife Conservation Section, Wildlife Resources Division,





# Stretch Break/Provide Drafted Responses



# Review EPD Drafted Responses to Comments Received

*Ashley Reid, CDM Smith*

# Review Draft Responses

- Response to Dr. Amy Rosemond, Distinguished Research Professor, University of Georgia

Dr. Rosemond,

Thank you for your comments regarding the draft Regional Water Plans. We value your expertise and input, and thank you for your prior service in the development of the Water Water Plan. Each of the 10 Regional Water Planning Councils have considered your comments, and they have authorized EPD to provide this collective response to the concerns you have raised.

Pursuant to Section 14 of the State Water Plan, Council members are appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House and must reside in the counties of each planning region. The appointing officials may "consider pre-qualified nominees for appointment, as well as such other individuals as they may choose." EPD is open to receiving any nominees that the Odum School of Ecology or others may recommend for appointment to the Regional Water Planning Councils. Those nominations can be sent to me, and and they can then be included in any future recommendations shared with the appointing officials.

Regarding your comments on water quality and monitoring of waters of the State, the plans do address the current water quality conditions in Section 3, including consideration of the Georgia's Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report. During the planning process, the councils consider the most current water quality data that has been collected by Georgia EPD and other entities. The information that Councils receive is also available on EPD's database website <https://gomaspublishing.epd.org/and through USGS gage records>. The Council's Plans have and continue to stress the need for continuous monitoring, as well as the collection of additional data. Additionally, the Councils also consider surface water quality and quality modeling (resource assessment) results that analyze water quality parameters that correlate with the state's water quality standards. Importantly, these models analyze both current conditions (including model calibration) as well as future conditions based on water demands and returns that are projected 40 years into the future. These models analyze a variety of water quality conditions, including both dry/drought and wet/stormwater-driven conditions, and can continue to be utilized in future planning cycles to analyze extreme weather events (e.g., long-term drought).

[Jennifer's signature]



# Review Draft Responses

- Response to United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Maholland,

Thank you for providing comments from the Georgia Ecological Services regarding the draft Regional Water Plans. We value your expertise and input. Each of the 10 Regional Water Planning Councils have considered your comments, and they have authorized EPD to provide this collective response.

In general, your comments address items that the Councils would benefit from learning more about directly from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In particular, more detailed information about how the Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and Georgia Natural Heritage Program intersect with the management of water resources in the planning regions would be helpful to the Councils. More detailed information will also enable to Councils to more fully consider how the Plans can reference and address the various species and habitats that your comments identify (including those that are terrestrial). Several of the Plans address the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), but the Councils would also benefit from learning how they can more thoroughly and uniformly address the high priority items in the SWAP. Those Plans that reference the SWAP have already benefited from participation and information provided by representatives of the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division.

Based on your comments, we would like to invite you or other U.S. FWS staff to attend, and possibly present it to the Regional Water Planning Councils during their future meetings so that they can more fully consider this information in the next planning cycle. Each Council meeting also includes time for public comments. A list of the planning regions (with County boundaries) is available at <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/water-planning-regions> and you or your team can self-subscribe to receive notices about upcoming Council meetings at <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/subscribe-email-updates> (either by region, or for all 10 regions). If you have any questions or need more information on how to get involved with the Councils, please contact Clete Barton at [clete.barton@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:clete.barton@dnr.ga.gov).

[Jennifer's signature]



# Public/Elected Officials Comments/Questions

# Thank You

## Need More Information?

[reidan@cdmsmith.com](mailto:reidan@cdmsmith.com)

[Haydn.Blaize@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:Haydn.Blaize@dnr.ga.gov)