**Memorandum**

*To: Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council*

*From: Laura Hartt and Michelle Vincent, Jacobs*

*Date: December 8, 2021*

*Subject: Upper Oconee Council (UOC) Meeting (subject to Council review and approval)*

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting, held virtually on December 8, 2021, on the Zoom meeting platform, from approximately 1:30 to 2:30 PM.

1. **Welcome and Council Business**

Council Chairman Melvin Davis called the meeting to order and welcomed the Council and other attendees. Roll was called. Chairman Davis asked for motions and seconds to approve the April 21, 2021 draft Meeting Summary and the December 8, 2021 draft Meeting Agenda. Both were approved without dissent.

1. **EPD Updates – Anna Truszczynski (EPD)**

**Appointments**

Anna Truszczynski (EPD) advised the Council that EPD was still waiting for new appointments from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House.

***Current Efforts/Plan Timeline***

Ms. Truszczynski also gave the Council an update on the timeline for the overall Regional Planning process, noting that

* Technical work (i.e., forecasting, resource assessments) began in 2020 to support plan update efforts;
* Draft plans will be completed for public comment September 2022;
* Plans will be finalized December 2022; and
* Council meetings will happen quarterly in 2022.

***Seed Grants***

Summaries of current, active Seed Grant projects were distributed to Councils prior to the meeting for three projects:

* University of Georgia: ARCGIS toolbox for Automating Digitization of Septic Systems
* Georgia Water Planning & Policy Center: Flow dependent benefits and values of water resources in the Upper Oconee Region
* City of Madison: GIS Mapping

Two 2021 Seed Grant applications were submitted for the 2002 award period:

* Athens-Clarke County: Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements
* Union County Extension: Soil Erosion Reduction on North GA Terrain

Ms. Truszczynski stated that decisions would be finalized within the month.

*Post meeting update: neither project was approved for funding*.

1. **BEAM Model Update – Dr. Wei Zeng**

Dr. Wei Zeng gave a brief update on the Basin Environmental Assessment Model (BEAM). Dr. Zeng noted that future conditions will be contingent on forecast data received from the Metro North Georgia Regional Water Planning District, expected mid-December. He also noted that Georgia EPD will have a complete resource assessment model for every river basin in Georgia completed by March 2022.

1. **Agriculture Forecast – Mark Masters (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center)**

Mark Masters (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center) gave an update on the agricultural forecasts. Mr. Masters noted that the University of Georgia updated the statewide wetted acreage database in 2020, and modeled crop projections though 2060. See Presentation Slides for more details.

The Chair thanked Mr. Masters for an excellent update.

Once finalized, agricultural water use forecasts will be available on the Georgia Water Planning website: <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/forecasting/agricultural-water-use>.

1. **Forecasting Q&A**

**Municipal – Laura Hartt (Jacobs)**

Laura Hartt (Jacobs) summarized the Upper Oconee municipal forecast for the Council, noting eight counties with increased demand, with Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, and Walton counties having relatively large increases.

Question: Are Office of Planning and Budget numbers for the counties different from those of the 2020 US Census?

Answer: 2020 US Census is not incorporated into the current plan.

Municipal water use forecasts are available on the Georgia Water Planning website: <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/forecasting/municipal-water-use>.

**Industrial and Energy – Bill Davis (CDM Smith)**

Bill Davis (CDM Smith) provided a brief overview of some of the background information relating to the Industrial and Energy forecasting efforts.

*Industrial:*

Mr. Davis reminded the Council that initial industrial forecasts relied on linking employment numbers with water demands. This methodology did not take into account  improved efficiency and automation that could reduce water demand even as employment remained steady or increased. These industrial forecasts were not updated for the 2017 planning update. For the 2022 plan update,

new industrial forecasts were developed using input from an advisory group with multiple members from a broad group of industrial facilities stakeholders. Each of four sectors provided detailed information to develop category specific forecasts that were incorporated into the overall industrial forecasts for the region.

Mr. Davis noted that the 2060 forecasts are fairly consistent with the 2020 forecasts, with some small increases in Barrow, Clarke, and Jackson counties.

Industrial water use forecasts are available on the Georgia Water Planning website: <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/forecasting/industrial-water-use>.

*Energy:*

Mr. Davis summarized the stakeholder process involved in deriving the energy forecasts. He further noted that the process was a top-down process, where demand was aggregated at the state level, and then distributed to regions according to need/use. The thermoelectric power forecast includes natural gas- and coal-fired generating units.

Mr. Davis noted that forecast models showed lower needs for the region than previous forecasting efforts had. Thus, while nuclear is projected to increase, coal will likely be phased out by 2030. Natural gas and renewable energy are assumed to increase to meet future needs.

Energy water use forecasts are available on the Georgia Water Planning website: <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/forecasting/energy-water-use>.

1. **Public Comment**

Chairman Davis asked if there were any comments from members of the public or local officials.

Question (Amy Rosemond): Going forward, what will regional water plans say about plans for extreme drought?

Response (Ms. Hartt): Modelling efforts will help us identify potential gaps due to drought conditions, which in turn will guide selection of best management practices to address those gaps.

Response (Dr. Wei Zeng): In the modeling process, we have included potential 80- year extreme droughts and can test water supply scenarios for when systems are stressed due to drought. The Council can use that information to select management practices that address those scenarios.

1. **Next Steps/Wrap Up/Adjourn**

The Chairman noted that the next meeting would most likely be in March 2022, potentially in person. He then asked the Council to contact Ms. Hartt with any specific concerns or input on meeting location and dates as well as any ideas for topics or speakers.

The Chairman thanked the meeting organizers, speakers, and participants for joining.

The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

**Meeting Attendance**

Council Members

* Melvin Davis (Chairman)
* Pat Graham (Vice-Chair)
* Kevin Little
* Stuart A. Cofer
* Rabun Neal
* Danny Hogan
* Hunter Bicknell

Georgia EPD Staff

* Anna Truszczynski
* Jennifer Welte
* Wei Zeng

Public Attendees and Agency Partners

* Brian Wiley, City of Gainesville
* Cassidy Lord, Upper Oconee Watershed Association
* Gail Cowie, Water Planning and Policy Center
* Mark Masters, Water Planning and Policy Center
* Carol Flaute, General public
* Amy Rosemond, UGA
* Roger Wilhelm, City of Winder

Planning Contractors

* Laura Hartt, Jacobs
* Michelle Vincent, Jacobs
* Ashley Reid, CDM Smith
* Bill Davis, CDM Smith