

Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting

June 14, 2023



**GEORGIA
WATER PLANNING**

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Welcome & Council Business

Pat Graham, UOC Vice Chair

Welcome & Council Business

- Welcome and Introductions
- Approve Draft Meeting Summary from March 23, 2023 Council Meeting
- Approve Today's Draft Meeting Agenda

Council Meeting Agenda

Objectives:

- 1) Receive updates from EPD
- 2) Review public comments on draft plan
- 3) Review new revisions from technical review and March Council meeting
- 4) Finalize any revisions needed for adoption of final plan
- 5) Receive public comments
- 6) Adopt final revised plan

9:45 – 10:00 am	Online Check-in/Roll Call	Michelle Vincent, Jacobs
10:00 – 10:05 am	Welcome and Council Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve Draft Meeting Summary (4/14/22) • Approve Draft Meeting Agenda 	Chairman Melvin Davis
10:05 – 10:15 am	EPD Updates	Ania Truszczynski, EPD
10:15 – 10:35 am	Comments on Draft Plan from Public Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and identify revisions if needed 	Gail Cowie, GWPPC
10:35 – 10:55 am	New Revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and provide feedback 	Gail Cowie, GWPPC
10:55 – 11:15 am	Finalize Revisions	Gail Cowie, GWPPC
11:15 – 11:30 pm	Public Comments/Local Elected Official Comments	Chairman Melvin Davis
11:30 – 11:40 am	Adopt Final 2023 Revised Plan	Chairman Melvin Davis
11:40 – 11:50 am	Wrap Up and Adjourn	Chairman Melvin Davis



EPD Updates

Ania Truszczynski, EPD



Public Comments on Draft Plan

Gail Cowie, Water Policy Center

Comment 1 – Carol Flaute, NEGRC

- Comment
 - Add reference to Regional Commissions' enabling legislation
- Draft Response
 - Thank you for your comment and engagement in water planning
 - Suggested Plan Revision
 - Reference Regional Commissions' enabling legislation in Section 2

Revised Text for Council Review

- Section 2.3 Local Policy Context

“Georgia’s 12 RCs are quasi-governmental regional planning organizations established by the Georgia Planning Act (O.C.G.A. 50-8-32) ~~created~~ and managed under Georgia law by their member local governments to serve regions that share similar economic, physical, and social characteristics.”

Comment 2 – Charles Hawkins

■ Comment

- Plan ignores risk of interbasin transfers
- Social Circle's transfer from Strouds Creek to Little River
- Threats to water quality are minimized
- Recommends cooperative effort between local governments in this area

■ Draft Response

- EPD's withdrawal permitting accounts for interbasin transfers
- Means that the forecasts and resource assessment do as well
- Given the number of localities in two river basins, transfers are an important water resource tool
- Tracking them is important

■ Suggested Plan Revision

- None

Comment 3 – Charles Hawkins

- Comment
 - Plan ignores risk of interbasin transfers
 - Newton County' transfer from Cornish Creek to Little River and Stanton Springs facility
 - Rivian development not addressed
 - Recommends cooperative effort between local governments in this area
- Draft Response
 - Same response as Comment 2
- Suggested Plan Revision
 - None

Comment 4 – Jerry Hood, Barrow County

■ Comment

- In 2017 plan, Barrow's forecasted wastewater need is 9.78 MGD in 2050
- In 2023 update, Barrow's forecasted wastewater need is only 5.72 MGD in 2060
- Seems impossible

■ Draft Response

- For 2017 forecast, a decline in % septic usage was predicted
- But decline is unlikely without planned wastewater/sewer projects
- For the recent forecast, lacking those specifics, % septic usage was held constant
- Will be revisited prior to 2023 revision
- Suggested Plan Revision
 - None

New Comment – Charlie Armentrout & Terry Hollis, Athens-Clarke

■ Comment Summary

- Forecast water and wastewater demands for Clarke County are too low
- Based on Athens-Clarke's 2020 Service Delivery Plan, 2060 forecast values should be increased to 30-35 MGD for water and 26-30 MGD for wastewater

■ Draft Response

- Difficult to change forecasts at this late stage
- Differences may be due to estimates of certain input parameters
- Forecasts will be revised in advance of 2028 plan update

■ Suggested Plan Revision

- To be discussed at meeting

Options for Revisions of Section 4

- Add Clarke-specific language to Table 4-2 and 4-3
 - “Clarke County adopted a Service Delivery Plan in 2020 that projects 2060 water demand and wastewater flows higher than shown here (water: 30-35 MGD; wastewater: 26-30 MGD).”
 - “The Council recommends that the higher numbers be evaluated using the resource assessment models.”
- Add general text to Section 4.1.1 and Section 4.1.2
 - “The forecasting methodology may result in discrepancies between local planning documents and the forecasts in this regional water plan. Forecasts will be updated in advance of the 2028 plan revision and specific input received from water and wastewater service providers will be incorporated at that time.”

Comment 5 – Peter Mulholland, USFWS

■ Comment

- Address priorities from State Wildlife Action Plan
- Include current info on imperiled species from GAWRD and protected species from USFWS
- Address impaired waters and steps toward compliance
- UO plan as good example of flow metrics to protect sensitive fishes and habitats

■ Draft Response

- Councils would benefit from learning more about items in comments
- How do specifics on species and habitats interact with a region's water planning and management?
- FWS staff invited to attend Council meetings and provide additional info

■ Suggested Plan Revision

- Revise Section 3.3.3 to enhance info from State Wildlife Action Plan

Revised Text for Council Review

- Section 3.3.3, p. 3-25

“Within the Region’s waters are several species WRD’s Biodiversity Portal provides information on the species greatest conservation needs identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan. The species of greatest conservation need includes 47 animal and 40 plant species. Approximately half of these are aquatic or water-dependent species, including two fish and two mussel species that are listed by Georgia (but not the Federal government) as threatened or endangered.”

Comment 6 – Dr. Amy Rosemond, UGA

■ Comment

- Deeply concerned about representation on Councils
- Water quality issues not dealt with adequately
- Need more direct feedback between monitoring of resources and their management
 - Fund and staff EPD
 - Monitor progress and adequacy of management practices

■ Draft Response

- Describes process for Council appointments and invites nominations
- Explains water quality monitoring data and modeling results considered by the Councils
- Notes emphasis in plans on monitoring and collection of additional data

■ Recommended Plan Revision

- None

Other Revisions Since March Meeting

Gail Cowie, GWPPC

Section 3.2.1 Surface Water Quality (Assimilative Capacity)

- Revised text to clarify assimilative capacity and effect of low flows (p. 3-4)

“A water body assimilates pollutants by chemical and biological processes that break compounds down as well as physical processes that bind compounds to sediment. Those processes can depend, in part, on streamflow levels, and low streamflows generally decrease a water body’s assimilative capacity.”

Section 3.2.1 Surface Water Quality (Assimilative Capacity)

- Revised text to distinguish point vs. nonpoint sources (p. 3-4)

“Pollutants enter waterbodies from permitted discharges of treated wastewater (point sources) and via stormwater runoff from different activities on lands in the watershed (nonpoint sources). Point sources are managed through practices that are different from those applied to nonpoint sources. As permit limits are tightened to manage pollutant loading from point sources, nonpoint sources become a larger proportion of the load, increasing the importance of nonpoint source management. Pollutant loads decrease a water body’s assimilative capacity and overloading a water body with pollutants will result in violations (exceedances) of water quality standards.”

Section 3.2.1 Surface Water Quality (Assimilative Capacity)

- Revised text to clarify how nutrients and chlorophyll *a* relate (p. 3-9)

“Elevated levels of chlorophyll *a* indicate the presence of excess nutrients, which cause algal growth that can affect recreational water use and impact taste and odor in water supplies.”

Section 3.2.2 Surface Water Availability

- Added note to Table 3-3 (p. 3-13)

"Permitted direct discharges of wastewater are included in the evaluation but land application systems are not."
- Corrected the numbers of wastewater facilities analyzed and the number with wastewater assimilation challenges (p. 3-13)
 - 44 facilities analyzed
 - 27 with wastewater challenges

Section 3.2.2 Surface Water Availability

- Added note to Table 3-5 with names of facilities that do not show wastewater assimilation challenges (p. 3-15)

Municipal Facilities

- Maysville WPCP
- Jefferson Central City WPCP
- Jackson County Water & Sewer Authority
- Hoschton WPCP
- Oconee County Calls Creek WPCP
- Madison Northside WPCP
- Greensboro South WPCP
- City of Dexter

Industrial and Thermoelectric Facilities

- KEMRON Environmental Services, Inc. (two facilities)
- Wayne Farms
- Georgia Pacific
- Imerys Clays Inc. Sandersville (two facilities)
- BASF Corporation Gordon
- Georgia Power Co - Plant Branch

Section 3.3.1 Water Use Classifications (Designated Use)

- Updated Table 3-8 with the current list of waters designated for drinking water or recreation (p. 3-18 and 3-19)
 - Added 6 waterbodies:
 - Cornish Creek in Walton County
 - Hard Labor Creek in Morgan County
 - Little River in Putnam County
 - Marbury Creek in Barrow County
 - Oconee River in Laurens County
 - Sherrills Creek in Greene County
 - Deleted 1 waterbody:
 - Popes Branch in Putnam County
(in Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Region)

Section 5.2 Surface Water Availability Comparisons

- Corrected the numbers of wastewater facilities analyzed and the number with wastewater assimilation challenges (p. 5-5)
 - 44 facilities analyzed
 - 27 with wastewater challenges
- Added note to Table 5-2 (p. 5-5)

"Permitted direct discharges of wastewater are included in the evaluation but land application systems are not."

Section 5.2 Surface Water Availability

- Added text with facilities that do not show wastewater assimilation challenges (p. 5-6)

Municipal Facilities

- Maysville WPCP
- Jefferson Central City WPCP
- Jackson County Water & Sewer Authority
- Hoschton WPCP
- Oconee County Calls Creek WPCP
- Madison Northside WPCP
- Greensboro South WPCP
- City of Dexter

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- KEMRON Environmental Services, Inc. (two facilities)
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Section 5.2 Surface Water Availability Comparisons

- Added rock quarries as a future water source (p. 5-6)

”A variety of management practices can address future challenges in dry years. Examples include the following:

- Interconnections between neighboring water providers;
- Drought management measures implemented by GAEPD and users in the Region;
- Development of alternate water supply sources like the quarry projects undertaken by Athens-Clarke County and the Cities of Auburn and Winder; and
- Development of new water supply storage.”

Section 5.3 Surface Water Quality Comparisons

- In Section 5.3.1 (Assimilative Capacity Assessments), added text describing pollutant loading and assimilation (p. 5-10)

“As described in Section 3, pollutant loads come from permitted discharges of treated wastewater and nonpoint sources carried in stormwater runoff. Assimilation of pollutants occurs through physical, chemical, and biological processes.”
- In Section 5.2.1 (Nutrient Loadings), deleted references to major and minor facilities (p. 5-12)

Revisions from Technical Review

- Section 3
 - Clarified meaning of 'exceedances' (p. 3-5)
 - Node numbers deleted from Figure 3-9
- Section 5
 - Node numbers deleted from Figure 5-2
- Section 9
 - Added references for per capita water use and disposal in households with septic systems
 - Updated references to technical reports documenting surface water and water quality resource assessments



Finalize Revisions

Gail Cowie, Water Policy Center

Public Comments/Local Elected Official Comments

Pay Graham, UOC Vice Chair

Adopt Final 2023 Draft Plan

Pat Graham, UOC Vice Chair

Wrap Up / Next Meeting / Adjourn

Pat Graham, UOC Vice Chair