



Meeting Summary

Upper Flint Regional Water Council Meeting

One Griffin Center – Griffin, GA

January 12, 2018

Welcome, Introductions, Chairman's Discussion

Upper Flint Chair Donald Chase welcomed members, thanked everyone for their attendance, and offered an invocation. Chairman Chase noted the recent passing of former Council member Cliff Arnett and the pending retirement from the Council of Dick Morrow. He thanked Mr. Morrow for his service to the Council.

Kristin Rowles (Georgia Water Planning & Policy Center) reviewed the meeting agenda and introduced the new EPD liaison for the Council, Gigi Steele.

Seed Grant Applications Discussion

Chairman Chase reviewed two seed grant proposals for which he submitted letters of support in December. One was from Two River RC&D: Microbial Source Tracking for Species Identification in the Ulcohatchee Creek Watershed. Chairman Chase asked Lance Renfrow (Two Rivers RC&D) to briefly describe this project, which will address fecal coliform in Ulcohatchee Creek and support implementation of a watershed management plan in that watershed. The second was from the UGA Stripling Irrigation Research Park. It is entitled Innovative Agricultural Irrigation Scheduling Tools for Increasing Water Use Efficiency. Seed grant proposals are currently under review at EPD.

Review of Council Member Survey Results

Next, Kristin reviewed the results of a recently completed Council-member survey (slides available). The survey was conducted as a part of an effort by EPD and the regional water planning contractors to gather input on possible improvements to the regional water planning process. A total of 256 surveys were distributed statewide to water planning council members. Approximately 36% of the surveys were returned. A total of 15 surveys were completed by

Upper Flint Council members. In general, Council members felt that the Plans were being implemented, and a strong majority indicated a solid understanding of the water demand forecasts and resource assessments used in planning. Respondents offered a broad range of recommendations to improve the process with an emphasis on engaging implementing actors and increasing public awareness. Council comments on the survey results included the following:

- Several Council members expressed confidence in the technical material used in developing the water plans. Members were also in general agreement that their confidence improved significantly since the first round of regional water planning.
- A member commented that it was important to have substantive issues to discuss at meetings in order to encourage attendance.
- A member suggested that the State will need to offer leadership and funding for plan implementation. There was discussion on what funding opportunities do exist at the state level to support various management strategies.
- Members also offered several comments on ways to educate elected officials and other local leaders on the importance of the water planning process and management practice implementation.
- A member asked if the survey results could be analyzed jointly for the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee, Middle Chattahoochee, and Upper Flint Councils. Kristin will look into it.

Outreach Tools for Council Members

Steve Simpson (Black & Veatch) presented a PowerPoint presentation and fact sheet that Council members may use for local education and outreach meetings. Electronic versions of the outreach materials were provided to each Council member via USB drive. Council member comments included the following:

- A member commented that the Council planning areas should be re-considered to focus more on river basin boundaries. The same member suggested that larger regions might help to boost meeting participation (e.g., Flint River region instead of Upper and Lower Flint regions). Council members discussed the importance of coordination with other Councils and holding joint Council meetings. Kristin said that neighboring Councils have expressed interest in having the next meeting be held as a joint meeting to discuss cross-council issues and practices.
- A member suggested additional context is needed regarding current and projected water demands (e.g., How to answer questions such as, “Will we run out of water?”). Members discussed how the planning process is iterative and there are opportunities over time to improve management that can impact water demand.

Steve asked the Council members to indicate on a sign-up form, which was circulated, whether they would be willing to do local presentations on the work of the Council and the regional water plan. Kristin offered to help Council members in tailoring slides to specific audiences.

Updates from EPD

Gigi Steele (EPD) provided the Council updates on a number of items on behalf of EPD. Topics discussed included:

- There is a specific annual appropriation for the statewide Regional Water Planning process. Funding is used to support Council meetings and contractors, the seed grant program and additional technical work to support future planning efforts.
- EPD's role and responsibilities in regional water planning include:
 - Select and provide funds for Council support contractors
 - Provide funds for technical data and information work
 - Provide staff support to Councils
 - Provide guidance to Councils
 - Use the regional water plans to guide permitting decisions
 - Consider input from Council members
 - Coordinate with Councils and contractors to support preparation of regional water plans
- The Two Rivers RC&D is currently implementing a 319(h) grant, which was supported by the Council, to develop a watershed management plan for the Achumpkee and Ulcohatchee Creek watershed.
- Oral arguments in the Supreme Court case between Florida and Georgia in the ACF were held on January 8, 2018. The arguments were for one hour with presentations from Florida, Georgia and the United States. A decision from the Court will be issued before the end of the current Court term (June 30). Kristin will send Council members a link to the transcript of the oral arguments.
- EPD has continued to collect data and perform technical work on the Claiborne Aquifer.
- GEFA has funded approximately \$23 million in projects (loans and grants) within the Upper Flint Council region in the last year, including projects with the Cities of Byromville, Thomaston, Griffin, and Woodbury.

LUNCH BREAK

Report on Agricultural Water Meter Program

Mark Masters (GWPPC) provided the Council an update on the Agricultural Water Meter program and EPD's focus on metering in the Flint and Suwannee River Basins. He substituted for Marjie Dickey, who could not attend the meeting as planned. Mark reported that EPD has contracted with the Georgia Rural Water Association to manage a 2017-18 "pilot" project with the goal of installing up to 900 meters in the target watersheds. He also reported that the Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center (GWPPC) at Albany State University is playing a key role in completing the assessments of locations that have been identified as possibly in need of meter installations. Mark also gave the Council a brief overview of the assessment process and the type of information collected on behalf of EPD. Council discussion addressed the scope and schedule of the pilot, and the importance of this effort in establishing reliable information on the agricultural water use. Council questions also included how much effort remained after the pilot.

Presentation on Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport

Polly Satler (Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport - HJAIA) gave an update on projects related to water conservation efforts supported by the Airport with a focus on green infrastructure development at the airport. HJAIA is the busiest airport in the United States, but is one of the smallest for major airports in terms of land area (approximately 4,700 acres). Runoff from the Airport drains into the Flint River (42%), Sullivan Creek (35%) and Mud Creek (23%). HJAIA completed a land suitability study for green infrastructure with American Rivers, and that study is helping to guide green infrastructure planning at the airport. The airport is incorporating green infrastructure into construction projects as the airport grows. The airport has adopted the City of Atlanta's stormwater policy, which requires that the first inch of rainfall be retained on-site.

Polly also reported on a new project coordinated among local communities and the airport called "Finding the Flint," which is focused on community development oriented toward the river.

- A member questioned how pollutant runoff (e.g., particles, fuel, de-icing chemical) from the Airport is handled.
 - HJAIA utilizes a "first-flush" system that captures the first 0.1" of rain into the sewer system for treatment rather than direct runoff.
- A member questioned if the cost of maintaining HJAIA is such that an additional airport site should be considered.
 - Polly said that this option is not under consideration at this time.

- A member asked if the retention of water on-site at the airport will have a negative impact on downstream Flint flows. Polly advised that the intent was to encourage greater infiltration onsite which theoretically would increase base flow into the Flint; however, answering this question specifically would require further research and modeling.

Public Comment

Debbie Gordon (USGS) commented that updating the models used for resource assessments is important, particularly in terms of model calibration. She noted that USGS data is used in the resource assessment models.

Next Steps

Kristin asked Council members about their preferences related to scheduling and agenda topics for the next meeting. Responses indicated that Council members would like to wait until the Florida v. Georgia case is decided by the Supreme Court so that the Council can learn about and discuss the ruling. Members also expressed support for a joint Council meeting to include the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee and Middle Chattahoochee Councils. Kristin also noted that she would send out a link to the transcript and audio recording of the Supreme Court oral arguments in the Florida v. Georgia Supreme Court from January 8, 2018. Donald Chase thanked the members for their efforts and attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Council Members Attending January 12, 2018 Meeting

Donald Chase, Chair

Dick Morrow, Vice Chair

Brian Upson

Brant Keller

Gene Brunson

Beth English

Lamar Perlis

Harold Fallin

Hays Arnold