

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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April 26, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: David Ashley, Jacobs/JJG
Tai-Yi Su, Jacobs/JJG
Charlotte Weber, Jacobs/JJG

SUBJECT: CM#10 Meeting Summary
Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Council

CC: Kevin Farrell, GA EPD
Ted Hendrickx, GA EPD

Georgia Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Planning Council

Council Meeting 10 Summary

Meeting Date: April 14, 2011
Location: GEMC Training Center, Smarr, Georgia

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Elmo Richardson welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance.

David Ashley announced that there had been some changes to the agenda since the drafts were issued prior to the meeting, and directed the Council members to the hard copies provided in the meeting handouts. The revised agenda include discussions on 1) additional outreach activities planned by EPD, and 2) EPD's public commenting tool. Section 3 also has been revised to include comments from the Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) and a hard copy of the revised section is included in the meeting handouts.

2. Committee Updates/319 Grant Recommendations

Committee Updates

Chairman Richardson introduced Council member Tony Rojas to give an update on Technical Sub-committee Meetings.

Rojas stated that the sub-committee had 6-8 meetings in person and via conference calls. The last meeting (March 24, 2011) was to review the revised draft plan that incorporated council and agency comments received. Support staff from Jacobs and EPD were present at this meeting. Rojas discussed the committee's review process, and stated that they reviewed each comment that was received, discussed suggested responses, and voted on suggested edits. In most cases, the Technical Committee was able to get consensus on suggested edits.

Ashley noted that the resulting document revision would be reviewed later in the meeting.

Rojas expressed gratitude to the technical subcommittee members for their efforts in this review process. Chairman Richardson also thanked the committee members for their participation and hard work.

Section 319 Grant Update

Chairman Richardson introduced Mike Hopkins from Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority (NCWSA) to provide the Council with a 319 grant update. Hopkins thanked the Council for their support of this project, and he provided a brief overview of the project. The project location is in the Little River headwaters, which begins in Walton County, then flows to Newton County. Three miles of the Little River are on 303(d) list for fecal coliform impairment. The goal of the project is reduction of fecal coliform levels to below the 2003 TMDL. Project elements include education, monitoring, BMPs, and environmental ordinances.

Ashley reminded the Council of the selection process for this project. EPD obtained approximately \$1 Million to implement Council-recommended 319 projects. This equates to approximately \$100,000 per Council. Section 319 is a non-point source grant program, and the Council is happy to take advantage of these funds. To be considered for Section 319 funding projects had to be ready to go, and Newton County stepped forward with this project that they had already prepared for grant submittal. Ashley noted that the project description was forwarded to the Council for their approval via e-mail voting in January 2011. The Planning Contractor received a total of 19 votes supporting the project. Ashley indicated that funds should be available to NCWSA at the start of Federal fiscal year, around October 1st.

3. Local Government and Utility Outreach Meetings Update/Additional Outreach

Local Government and Utility Information Meetings

Charlotte Weber reviewed the Council outreach meetings that had been held since the previous Council meeting. Local Government and Utility Information Meetings were held on February 24th in Jackson and February 28th in Warner Robins. Weber thanked Marianne Golmitz (City of Warner Robins) and Marcie Seleb (Butts County Water and Sewerage Authority) for their help in setting these meetings up.

Weber indicated the purpose of these meetings was to review the Draft Regional Water Plan and

to review the recommended water management practices and implementation responsibilities. She told the Council that a form was provided at each meeting to solicit public comment to help identify problems with the recommendations, time frames, and challenges. Weber presented to the Council an overview of the written comments received and indicated that meeting summaries for both meetings would be posted on the website soon.

Chairman Richardson noted he sent out personal letters to all Cities and Counties within Council encouraging their attendance at these meetings, but was somewhat disappointed at the lack of municipal attendance at meetings. Many utility members representing governments attended these meetings, but few officials attended.

EPD Outreach Activities

Ted Hendrickx discussed targeted outreach meetings on the planning process that EPD will be conducting. He indicated that EPD has developed a master list of around 25 organizations, comprised mainly of organizations that provided comments on the resource assessments. EPD is hoping to organize group meetings with these organizations between now and plan adoption in September to discuss the revisions to resource assessments and other plan issues that have come up. EPD will keep the Councils apprised of the progress with these meetings.

4. Review of Significant Changes to the Draft Plan

Ashley directed Council members to hard copies showing significant changes to the draft Plan (included in their meeting handouts). Ashley indicated that these plan edits represent input from the technical subcommittee. Ashley stated that the target date for delivery is the end of April, but also noted that process is still open to comments if any arise from this meeting.

Ashley provided an overview of changes Section by Section:

Section 1 – no major changes

Section 2 – Figures 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3 were enlarged for clarity

Section 3 – Ashley referred the Council members to the hard copies of Section 3 provided in the meeting handouts, as additional edits had occurred since the pre-meeting materials were distributed. Ashley indicated that the major changes to this Section revolved around adding additional language on ecosystems and in-stream uses and the changes reflected comments received from the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD). Edits to Section 3 include:

- Revisions to Figure 3-6 (now 3-7)
- Section 3.3 was revised to address WRD comments (mostly facts on fisheries resources)

Q: Jim Ham asked if this was the Section of the plan that discussed the projected demands for water and wastewater. Ham indicated that no increase in projected water or wastewater demands are shown for Monroe County, however the County has plans to bring a new plant online, (~6 MGD per EPD permit), so increases in demands are anticipated.

A: Tai Yi Su indicated that demand forecasts are presented in Section 4. Su indicated that this proposed plant should be referenced in the Supplemental Documentation for Section 4 or in footnote in tables. Su requested that she and Ham review the supplemental document to verify that this plant is included. <Note from Planning Contractor: Additional clarification is provided in footnotes of Table 5-1.>

Section 4 – no major changes

Section 5 –

- EPD revised its resource assessment for the Cretaceous Aquifer, where an initial gap was predicted. The new analysis indicates there is no longer a gap. Council will see edits to this section and the management practices to reflect this change.
- Page 5-2 – Energy demand was previously shown in the table as within the Jackson node as opposed to Lumber City – this location has been corrected.
- Tables 5-2 and 5-3 have been updated, with a column added to indicate the year that the permitted capacity is anticipated to be exceeded.
- Ashley indicated that this section can still be edited and will coordinate with Ham to ensure the proposed Monroe Plant is reflected in Table 5-1.
- Page 5-8 - In regard to surface water quality, the 2050 scenario assumes that wastewater treatment plants would be operating at full capacity while stream flows were low. This analysis represents critical conditions of discharge and receiving body flow that are unlikely to occur simultaneously. The proposed edits add a statement to this effect, and indicate that these calculations were used for conservative planning purposes.
- Section 5.3.3 was added to this section. This new section summarizes the extent of stream impairments across the region. The most wide-spread impairments for the region are attributed to fecal coliform levels and biota impacts.
- Section 5.4.2, Resource Assessment Concerns was added to the plan.
 - This section addresses the Council’s concern over limited planning nodes within the region. There is only one planning node in the region at Lake Jackson, and the Council feels there should be another planning node downstream to give a more complete picture of water availability across the region.
 - Section also addresses Council concerns over the different flows used in surface water availability and water quality Resource Assessments.
 - Section also addresses the concern that no additional in-stream flow analysis (only current EPD regulatory policy) was modeled within the region. EPD modeled in-stream flow analyses only for un-regulated nodes, and despite the small influence that Lake Jackson regulation has on flows in the lower portions of the Ocmulgee / Oconee / Altamaha basin, downstream areas were considered to be regulated.

Q: Rojas asked if additional changes been made to the document since the technical committee review.

A: Ashley indicated that there is a new paragraph and some edits within Section 3 including WRD comments and that the Executive Summary has been added since the technical committee

review. Ashley indicated that EPD comments were only editorial and were made to make all regional Council documents have similar look and feel. The WRD comments are mostly facts.

Comment: Rojas stated that he would like to the agency edits highlighted with technical committee edits in another color for comparison. Ashley stated that PC would produce a revised draft differentiating agency comments from the Technical Committee comments.

Comment: Su indicated that most changes were editorial, to reduce uncommon terminology, changes were universal edits to each Council's plan for consistency.

Section 5 (Continued)

- Table 5-3 was added at end of Section 5 – This new table summarizes potential water resources issues by County.

Section 6

- Ashley indicated that there were a lot of comments in this section from the technical committee regarding management practices, relating to both the quantity of practices listed and the priority of management practices.
- Some comments indicated that practices related to stream impairment were not assigned sufficient priority for region. In response, management practices WQ9, WQ10, and WQ11, were moved to priority practices, WQ11 was re-named to bring out the actions regarding ordinance adoption, and WQ21 – “Encourage Forest and Dirt road BMPs” was added to the recommended management practices based on Council comments.

Q: Larry McSwain commented that the revised table is much clearer to understand. He also appreciated the Technical Committee moving up some water quality measures to a higher priority, and indicated that he believes it makes the plan more credible. However, McSwain indicated that he did not understand the difference between the two types of water quality measures: “Enhanced Water Quality Standard and Monitoring” and “Enhanced Pollution” management practices

A: Ashley indicated that ”Enhanced Water Quality Standards” reflect infrastructure and point source management issues while “Enhanced Pollution” management reflects more non-point source management measures.

Section 6 (continued)

- Management Practice WS2 was reworded to focus on impacts of Metro Atlanta discharges upstream of the Middle Ocmulgee Region. Additional language was also added on research of emerging contaminants.

Section 7

- Ashley noted that all changes to management measures in Section 6 flow through to Sections 7 and 8.
- Table 7-3: Recommendations to state – Added language under policy to addresses Council concerns on in-stream flow policy and adaptive management strategy, particularly in relation to new water supply reservoirs.

Q: Rojas brought up a question regarding the emerging contaminant language in Sections 6 and

7. He indicated that he thought the technical committee's recommendation was to leave this issue to State and Federal policy. Rojas expressed concern about putting the burden of measuring these contaminants on the region or state without an EPA policy in place to show that these constituents will be of future concern. He stated that while individual utilities in the region may have concerns about emerging contaminants, they can still choose to monitor these constituents independently without including this language within the plan.

A: McSwain noted that current language does not commit communities to monitoring.

Comment: Chairman Richardson suggested changing language to "Encourage additional research on emerging contaminants".

Comment: Mark Wyzalek (Macon Water Authority) asked if concerns over Metro Atlanta's upstream discharges were still addressed if Chairman Richardson's suggested edits were made.

Comment: Su directs the Council to page 6-9 –Management Practice WS2 addresses the impacts of Metro Atlanta discharges upstream of the Council area. Su also clarified that Section 7.4 "Recommendations to the States" are designed to include "State" actions, not "actions" by individual utilities or local governments. Hendrickx of EPD concurred.

Comment: Rojas suggests removing reference to emerging contaminants, and just leaving concerns at blanket "pollutants" from Atlanta discharges

Comment: Berry Peters stated that the Council wants to proceed with Chairman Richardson's recommendation, changing language to "Encourage additional research on emerging contaminants"

Section 8 - updated to reflect changes to management practices & some additional minor editorial changes.

Ashley asked is there were any questions on materials covered so far

Q: Wyzalek asked is additional changes could still be made to the document.

A: Ashley indicated that, yes, changes could still be made, but all comments would need to be received quickly.

Comment: Rojas addressed previous concerns that the resource assessments were not complete. He indicated that based on discussion with EPD, that they have indicated that these documents are "ongoing". Rojas assured Council that these documents provide good data for now, and while the results may still change with additional work in the future, they still provide good data to base the Council recommendations on at this stage.

Comment: Ashley agreed with Rojas statement, and noted that while all models contain some estimated data, that EPD has put a lot of effort went into these tools.

Q: McSwain asked how any plan changes from this point forward will be handled? Will they be part of the public review process?

A: Ashley and Su stated that JJG/Jacobs can accept comments through April 20th. Ashley indicated that JJG/Jacobs would make the changes suggested at today's Council meeting, but that Council can "conditionally approve" plan with changes that are forthcoming. Ashley stated that they can send full comments back out to Council or the technical committee prior to submittal to EPD.

Q: Thomas Wicker asked about the 45-day public comment period. Is Council planning to look at changes again?

A: Ashley stated that the public comment period would last from May 9th – June 23rd. The projected schedule is to review and respond to public comments through July and August. Council may choose to meet in August, based on the magnitude of comments received. Ashley indicated that final Council review should occur by September 9th. After this date, EPD will adopt the plan as recommended, advise the Council of changes needed, or adopt with conditions. Final EPD adoption should occur by September 30th.

Q: Wicker asked if Council members could still make comments during public review period.

A: Kevin Farrell indicated that Council members do not need to use comment collection website, they can coordinate directly with Jacobs.

Comment: Ashley requested Council feedback on how they would like to handle the approval process.

Comment: Rojas recommended that Council conditionally approve the plan for public comment, but requests Jacobs to review document against technical committee recommendations to ensure all recommendations have been addressed.

Comment: Su noted that the technical committee meeting summary would be sent out to the entire Council so everyone could see their recommendations.

Q: Ham asked if the Council would meet again after the comments are received.

A: Ashley indicated that the decision was up to the Council and the level of comments received. Su commented that one Council plans to meet in mid-July and another in mid-September to discuss public comments received.

Comment: Ham indicated that he would support bringing the entire Council together to review comments and edits. Rojas concurred.

5. Public Comment Tool

Ashley presented a brief presentation on EPD's new web comment collection center. A one page fact sheet was distributed.

Ashley indicated that comments can be received online at: <http://www.gaepdcommentcenter.org> or e-mailed to EPDComments@dnr.state.ga.us

Ashley noted that all draft regional water plans will be available on the site, and the public will be able to select each plan to review, download the document for review, make comments, and view other comments being made.

Ashley reviewed the process for accessing documents and making comments.

Hendrickx indicated that the Councils can see all public comments as they are being made, so there will be no surprises at the end of the review process. He also noted that EPD will provide a preliminary comment review to decide if EPD or the Council should respond.

6. Executive Summary Review

Ashley introduced the draft Executive Summary, which was provided in hard copy in the meeting handouts. He indicated that although this document is newly drafted, that it should contain no information that council members have not seen.

Su mentioned that each Council guided what their final document would look like. Some Councils provided longer executive summaries. She encouraged Council members to review the summary to ensure that their message is presented as desired. The executive summary will be included in the public review version after finalization. Su noted that JJG/Jacobs would provide all Council members with a hard copy of the final draft plan with the supplemental documents on CD.

7. Council Discussion: Future Council Role and Recommendations

Ashley requested feedback from the Council members on the future of the Council. What do they want their role to be going forward? Who will be the clearing house for information and coordination for regional water planning activities? Does the Council have recommendations for Regional Commissions to be involved?

Comment: Chairman Richardson indicated that Council overlaps 3 Regional Commissions, so coordination with these groups is difficult. He also noted that the final decision on the Council's future will likely be made by EPD.

Ashley noted that some Councils are making recommendations to the state about the re-appointment of Council members. Existing members terms expire February 2012, but some Councils are recommending that the state consider the renewal of Council terms for at least one-third of the existing members to provide continuity.

Q: Chairman Richardson asked if appointment decisions would ultimately go back to the State legislature.

A: Farrell indicated that likely they would, but Council recommendations, if captured, would still be considered.

Comment: Gator Hodges testified to the benefit of keeping some existing members engaged.

Comment: Rojas also indicated that he would also support some renewals for a continuity factor.

Q: Hodges asked if the Councils would stand permanently.

A: Su indicated that some Councils are recommending that. For example, the Savannah Upper-Ogeechee Council plans to form a permanent organization.

Comment: Farrell indicated that the plan will be updated at some point down the road, there will likely be some Council formed for this process

Comment: Wyzalek noted that the State Water Plan indicated that regional plans will be updated every 5 years.

Comment: Ashley concurred, but indicated that the law does not make any statements about Council reappointment.

Comment: Charles Harris noted that as a stakeholder, he would like to see continued input and involvement from a Council as the region changes.

Q: McSwain asked if the most appropriate means for making recommendations was to include a statement in the plan on the Council's desires.

A: Ashley indicated it was.

Q: Barry Peters asked if the new administration was backing this process?

A: Farrell indicated yes, that there is a lot of talk about water. He also noted that having these plans in place will be important for the State when talking to other states about our shared water issues.

Comment: Tony Bass notes that Georgia is a blessed state with 50+ annual inches of rainfall each of year. He noted that he has not seen this highlighted in the plan.

Comment: Rojas concurred and noted that EPD Director Barnes has previously indicated that Georgia's water issues are more political in nature than physical.

Comment: Bass requests that a note about the average quantity of rainfall should be added to executive summary.

8. Vote to Approve Draft Plan for Submittal to EPD

Chairman Richardson opened the floor for discussion related to adoption of the plan or any associated conditions of approval.

After no discussion was initiated, co-chair Ben Copeland made a motion to vote to adopt the draft plan subject to the inclusion of the technical committee items. Council members [Larry McSwain](#) and [Tony Rojas](#) seconded the motion.

Once the motion was on the floor Chairman Richardson opened the floor to any discussion.

Q: Ham asks is there still can be changes to plan after this draft adoption

A: Chairman Richardson indicated that yes, this process will be a fluid process through the public comment period.

A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously among voting members. (Russell Adams, a Council member ex-officio, was in attendance but abstained from voting).

Chairman Richardson thanked the Council for their hard work over the past 2 years.

Comment: Rojas thanked Jacobs and EPD staff for their support through this process.

Council made a resounding support of thanks for Chairman Richardson.

Chairman Richardson opened the floor to any comments from the public or local officials. No comments were received.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Meeting Attendees

Council Members in attendance

Russ Adams
Tony Bass
Jason Briley
Blair Cleveland
Ben Copeland Jr
Keith Dalton
Jim Ham
Bobby Hamby
Charlie Harris
Gator Hodges
William Lazenby

Paul Leath
Larry McSwain
Hal Newberry
Harvey Norris
Barry Peters
Robert Ray
Elmo Richardson
Tony Rojas
William Whitten
Thomas Wicker

Council Members not in attendance

John Bemby
Jerry Davis
Robert Dickey
Richard Haddock

Jay Matthews
Eva Persons
Terry Scarborough

Staff in attendance

Kevin Farrell (EPD)
Ted Hendrickx (EPD)
David Ashley (Jacobs JIG)
Tai-Yi Su (Jacobs JIG)
Charlotte Weber (Jacobs JIG)
Katherine McLeod Gurd (AECOM)

Technical Sub-Committee in attendance

Marianne Golmitz (City of Warner Robins)
Mike Hopkins (Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority)
Mark Wyzalek (Macon Water Authority)

Partnering Agencies and General Public

Brandon Ashley (GA Farm Bureau)
Amberly Ferris (Lamar County Water)
Mark Fordham
*Karol Kelly (UGA-Extension)
*Patti Lanford (Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources)
*Skip Langley (Regional Representative for Senator Isakson)
Sam Najim
*Bill Stembridge (Regional Representative for Senator Chambliss)
Gene Trammell
*Adrienne Wood (Department of Community Affairs)

**Indicates attendee represented a partnering agency*