

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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March 30, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

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

SUBJECT: Local Governments and Utilities Information Meeting
Meeting Summary
Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Council

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

Georgia Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan Regional Water Planning

Local Governments and Utilities Information Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: February 24, 2010
Location: Butts County Administration Building
C. Wayne King Auditorium
625 West Third Street
Jackson, Georgia

1) Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Elmo Richardson welcomed the group. He introduced the Council members in attendance including Larry McSwain, Charlie Harris and Bill Whitten, and Technical Committee members Mike Hopkins, Marcie Seleb, and Mark Wyzalek. He said the Council was fortunate to have strong support by the Middle Ocmulgee Council members, as demonstrated by the high attendance rate by council members averaging approximately 80% since the planning process began in 2009. He briefly discussed the vision and goals adopted by the Council [Note: display

boards with the Council's adopted vision and goals were provided].

2) Overview of Planning Process

David Ashley thanked Technical Committee member Marcie Seleb for arranging for the meeting facilities. He mentioned that copies of draft plan and supporting information were available for anyone who would like a copy. He then showed the Council website and where information about regional water planning can be found: future update of the draft plan will be posted under the "Our Plan" link.

Ashley provided an overview of the planning process.

Council Meeting and Schedule: The Council has had 9 Council meetings since 2009 and is expected to complete a draft recommended plan to submit to EPD for consideration by May 2nd 2011. EPD plans to begin the public commenting process on May 9th. Adoption of the plan by EPD is expected in September 2011.

Planning Elements: Major planning elements include demand forecasts, resource assessments, and management practices selection. Timeline of each element was discussed.

Draft Regional Water Plan: Ashley provided an overview of Sections 1-5 and Tai-Yi Su discussed recommended management practices in Section 6. Ashley then discussed implementation of management practices in Section 7, and monitoring and reporting responsibilities of the Regional Water Plan in Section 8.

The region's population is projected to double from over about 560,000 to over 1 million. Over half of the population of the region is in three counties: Newton, Bibb and Houston counties. These counties will have larger water and wastewater systems; while other counties are less populated, more rural in characteristics with smaller water systems. Water demand of the region is projected to grow from 250 million gallons per day (MGD) in 2010 to 346 MGD in 2050. Wastewater flow in the region is projected to increase from 155 to 251 MGD from 2010 to 2050.

Water Availability Issues: No gap (or shortage) is expected through 2050 on a regional level based on EPD's Resource Assessments for both surface and groundwater; however, there may be shortage on a local basis such as Newton, Jasper, and Houston counties. He showed the surface water river basin maps with planning nodes associated with sub-basins (or local drainage area). The Surface Water Availability Model EPD used only includes two planning nodes (Jackson and Lumber City nodes) for the Middle Ocmulgee Region. The Groundwater Resource Assessment showed that the estimated yield is likely to exceed projected 2050 demand of the areas in the State that withdraw water from the Cretaceous Aquifer. Therefore, no gap is expected for the groundwater users in the region.

Water Quality Issues: Major water quality issues in the region include 1) Potential low future assimilative capacity in some of the streams south of Fall Lies, 2) Nutrients loadings – projected high nitrogen loadings in the Upper Ocmulgee Basin draining into Lake Jackson, 3) wastewater system infrastructure shortage: Newton, Houston and Butts counties may need additional treatment capacity; 4) existing impaired stream status due to mostly to non-point source pollution, or upstream point source (treated wastewater effluent) discharges.

Ashley showed the map comparing the assimilative capacity based on dissolved oxygen (DO) for baseline and future conditions and concluded that there is a need for more intense management for water quality improvements. He also showed the impaired streams map of the region. The stream segments may be listed as “impaired” (or on 303d list) if they do not support their current designated uses based on existing water quality standards. Many of the stream segments are listed “impaired” in the Middle Ocmulgee Region are due to biota (fish community) or fecal coliform violation. There are also current EPD efforts considering of revision of fecal coliform standards.

Question: I have been counting flushes and it seems that flow low toilet does not do the job because it requires multiple flushing sometimes. Also, why isn’t there more consideration on rainwater capture (over roofs or over parking lots)?

Answer: The technology for low flow toilets have improved greatly since they became available and for long-term planning, we certainly assume this technology will be further improved. Rainwater capture is a good idea for small scale residential and community non-potable use and is encouraged.

Management Practices: Su went over the recommended management practices. There are 13 priority practices and 23 additional practices. The priority practices are selected to address gap and existing regulations. The additional practices are a menu for local governments to select from after they have done their local scale studies to determine what their specific issues and required management practices to address these issues. The State Water Plan stated that “water conservation” will be a priority management practices. The Council recommended conservation practices required by SB370 (or Tier 1) and practices that may be addressed in upcoming regulations (Tier 2) as priority practices. For areas with local shortage, Tier 3 practices (other basic conservation practices that are not included in Tier 1 and Tier 2) are recommended. Some entities (including many of our agricultural users) may already have been implementation some of the Tier 3 practices and the Council encourage them to continue.

Question: Where can we find details of the Tiered Conservation Practices?

Answer: The Tiered conservation practices are listed in the *Supplemental Document – Draft Technical Memorandum on Demand Management Practices*. There are too many to list all in the plan itself. Different types of water conservation practices for each sector (residential, industrial,

energy and agricultural) are listed in the Supplemental Document. There are 10 conservation practices listed in Tier 1, 19 for Tier 2 and more than 40 practices for Tier 3.

Implementation: Most of the implementation responsibility is on local governments and water users. EPD has a major role in defining the details of rules and regulations, tracking progress and many partnering agencies, including DCA, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, Regional Commissions, Soil and Conservation Commission, and advocacy organizations, will also be involved.

Fiscal Implications: Ashley stated that unit costs for the management practices are provided so local governments/entities can estimate budget-level costs. The Regional Water Plan does not go down to the level of details required to conduct project level cost estimates.

Recommendations to the State: Ashley then presented the Council's Recommendations to the State, including a recommendation to study instream flow policy and additional statewide, regional and local water quality monitoring. The Council recommends EPD evaluate the current policy and make changes accordingly. There is additional monitoring needed to establish baseline conditions of streams, relative small number of streams currently are monitored for flow and water quality. The Council also recommends that additional nodes be added to the surface water resource assessment model in addition to the two existing.

Ashley discussed proposed benchmarks for monitoring the progress of the Regional Water Plans and plan update expectations (every 5 years). Suggested triggers for plan amendment also were discussed. EPD's three options on adopting the plan were discussed. EPD's will then take one of three actions:

- i. Adopt a recommended plan if it is complete and consistent with the provisions of the rules for regional water planning and guidance adopted pursuant to those rules; or
- ii. Advise the regional water planning council as to additional measures that should be taken to complete a recommended plan and make it consistent with the provisions of the rules for regional water planning and guidance adopted pursuant to those rules; or
- iii. Adopt a recommended plan with conditions.

Ashley asked the audience for written comments, and stated that submitting comments now does not preclude you from submitting formal comment during the public comment period.

3) Questions and Comments:

1. Comment (Ken McMichael): We can learn about capturing water from the Atlanta botanical garden. It built a large underground cistern for capturing rainwater off roof or

parking lot for its garden. How do we get our politician to look at appropriate resources to support the conservation and reuse goals? The Governor's task force only appropriate funding for building reservoir storage.

Comment (Mark Wyzalek): The governor's plan starts with reservoir, but Georgia's Water Wise Council has made "water conservation" recommendation to the State.

2. Comment (Marcie Seleb): There is a proposed bill HB 260, if passed it will do away with requirements for comprehensive plans; it is ironic that our plan recommends water/wastewater master plans every five years.

Answer: Will check on the status of the proposed bill and follow the outcome. The Council recommends local level master planning because the regional plan cannot get to that level of details. The frequency of planning is suggested and not required. Land use planning (in the comprehensive plan) definitely affects water resources.

3. Comment (Marcie Seleb): Will EPD says you need to do master plans every five years? EPD makes us do a lot.

Answer: The frequency (5 to 10 years) in the draft is "recommended" not "required". For counties projected to have infrastructure need, it may need to be done more frequently. For counties without infrastructure need 10 years may be sufficient. EPD does not require or suggest a mandatory 5-year interval. This was a subcommittee/council recommendation.

4. Comment: One way to promote conservation is to offer State income credit for water conservation measures.
5. Comment (Mark Wyzalek): In the water quality model, all wastewater treatment plants were assumed to operate at full permits and it is an overly conservative assumption and is not realistic. He mentioned that EPD has done new DO modeling for the Middle Ocmulgee River and showed no issue with DO.
6. Comment (Chairman Richardson): The whole planning has been very fluid, the data you mentioned has not been incorporated in the plan. New data has constantly been provided during this planning process and this process will continue to be a fluid process.
7. Comment: The Feldspar rock formation sometimes captures high quality ground water and needs to be evaluated for the region. Groundwater in this kind of special rock

formation has not been explored sufficiently for its availability; money is needed to explore the availability. This is a geological anomaly; the aquifer works more like the Coastal Plain aquifer.

8. Comment (Ken McMichael): There is an additional water source to be considered by the region: Jasper County submitted to EPD a 30-MGD permit application proposing the reuse of Metro District discharges from South River. It is a 40 million dollars project.

Chairman Richardson thanked all for attending on behalf of the Council. He asked the attendees to provide comments by **March 10, 2011**. The meeting was adjourned at 7pm.

Meeting Attendees

Public

Ken Sheets (Bibb County)
Mike Patterson (Butts County Commission)
David Massey (Butts County)
Billy Singhey (Butts County)
Bob Schwartz (City of Monticello)
Ronnie Jones (City of Perry Public Works)
David Dyes (Jasper County Development Authority)
Ken McMichael (Jasper County Water Authority)
Kathy Morgan (Newton County Commissioner)
Amberly Ferris (Lamar County Water)
Michael Davis (Jackson Progress-Argus)
Adriane Wood (Department of Community Affairs)
Ken McGuffey (Public)

Council Members

Elmo Richardson (Chair)
Charles Harris
Larry McSwain
William Whitten

Technical Committee Members

Mike Hopkins (Newton County Water and Sewer Authority)
Marcie Seleb (Butts County Water and Sewer Authority)
Mark Wyzalek (Macon Water Authority)

Staff

Ted Hendrickx, Georgia EPD
David Ashley, Jacobs
Tai-Yi Su, Jacobs
Charlotte Weber, Jacobs