

## Memorandum

*To: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council*

*From: Rick Brown and Brian Keel, CDM*

*Date: 07/02/09*

*Subject: Council Meeting 2 - Summary*

This memorandum summarizes the meeting of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 2 on June 24, 2009.

1) Welcome and Introductions/Recap Council Meeting 1/Approve Agenda

Chair Darvin Eason led the Council in roll call. Senator Greg Goggans gave a welcome to all in attendance. Council members replied that they had no trouble getting information and pre-meeting materials. The Planning Contractor presented a summary of results of the evaluation forms from Council Meeting 1.

The meeting continued with a welcome from the Planning Contractor (PC) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). An overview of the goals of the meeting was provided. These included:

- Finalizing the Council's operating procedures and rules for meetings. Executing the MOA with the Department of Community Affairs and the Environmental Protection Division
- Reviewing the population and employment forecasts and providing input on the developments affecting employment in the region and developments affecting population and housing in the region
- Gaining a broad understanding of Georgia's current agriculture water use and demand
- Identifying the purpose and nature of the water resource assessments that EPD is conducting for regional water planning
- Continuing the process of creating a regional vision

Results of the first meeting evaluations from Council members were presented. A brief discussion of the next meeting date and location was held. The dates available for the next meeting are September 8<sup>th</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>. Council members will provide available dates throughout the meeting and the date will be scheduled at the end of the meeting. The proposed agenda was presented.

A Council member commented that the Satilla River doesn't flow from Georgia into Florida, it flows to the Atlantic Ocean, and requested for a factual correction in the CM1 meeting summary. The Council approved the CM1 meeting summary and the CM2 Agenda.

## 2) MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings Presentation

The Planning Contractor and EPD made a presentation on the requested changes to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings. EPD described the method that was followed to evaluate the inputs that were received from the council and review the documents. EPD recommended changes only at locations where there was a conflict with the State Water Plan. A short summary of the discussion is provided below.

- Rule 6: It was decided that Decision making could be by show of hands or by verbal vote.
- If a member resigns, the Council can send a recommendation to EPD who will forward to appointing authority. The appointing authority is the only official that can make the replacement according to the State Water Plan. The Council should make a recommendation for replacing Linda Tanner, who resigned.
- An Alternate indicated that the Suwannee-Satilla Alternates have attended all meetings so far.
- Council held a discussion on what constitutes a quorum? *PC Response: Quorum is 50%+1. There are 30 members on the Suwannee-Satilla council so 16 people would constitute a quorum; Majority of these (9) can vote to pass an issue. So it is important to attend meetings to reach consensus on issues.*
- If a Council member misses a certain number of consecutive meetings can the Council vote that member off? *EPD Response: Based on the State Water Plan the Council does not have the authority to vote a member off. Suggestion was to have Chair or Vice-Chair contact the Member if they miss two consecutive meetings and ask them to*

*resign if they find no valid reason. The general rule of thumb for the Council would be not to include this as a hard and fast rule in the MOA documents, but the Council would use discretion to decide and let the Chair and Vice-Chair communicate.*

- Could the Ex-officio members ever vote? *EPD Response: No.*
- A Council member mentioned that one of the major drainages in the region is the St. Mary's River and asked to add St. Mary's to Council name. *EPD Response: The official Council name is already finalized in the State Water plan. As long as Council considers the water body in the plan, the prominent rivers do not have to be included in Council name.*
- Page 4 of MOA a Council member noted that the historical flows and capacities of the state's water bodies (rivers and aquifers) matter as much as what's going on now. A suggestion was made to change "current" to "current and historical". *EPD Response: Historical flows and capacities will be represented in resource capacity models. It was noted that unimpaired flows will be included in the resource assessments.*
- Property Rights must be respected.
- There was discussion of the status of MOA approval at other Council meetings. Most Council's to date have passed MOA - Lower Flint and perhaps one or two others have not.
- Some Council members suggested that the Council wait to talk to Dr. Couch in the meeting with Chairs and Vice Chairs on July 13th.
- The Public Attendees introduced themselves. Council discussed approval of the MOA.
- Council voted to table the vote on passing MOA until the end of the meeting.

### 3) Resource Capacity

EPD gave a presentation on Resource Capacity to show how gaps between demands and capacities can be eliminated by reducing demands and/or expanding resource capacities. The following questions/comments were addressed:

- If we end up with a large capacity in any of the region will it end up being utilized by another region? *EPD Response: It could conceivable be used by other regions but that*

*would likely be a Council decision. It could be a possible inter-Council discussion issue that EPD would help facilitate.*

- How are we going to handle the influence on how inter basin transfer is going to be done in 20-50 years. Is it going to be free? *PC Response: First step to think about is will the Council be interconnected to other regions, either by surface water and/or ground water. Later this year or next year there will be inter-Council meetings and it would be great to start anticipating which Councils would have the maximum effect on the Suwannee-Satilla Council, from employment and growth perspective, surface water , and ground water aquifers.*
- Is our and other water Councils' ability to implement some of these changes open to discussion? *EPD Response: When you are deliberating any issue about which you need to talk with another Council the first step would be to define what you need to talk about. It will eventually happen that specific issues will become topics that will need to be discussed with other Councils.*
- How will the downstream effect on other states be handled or are we not going to worry about this issue? *EPD Response: We will discuss Georgia issues now. EPD is also in discussion with other states regarding data sharing and data collection with respect to resource assessments. It's possible that the interstate process might lag a little but it is gearing up, especially right now with discussions with South Carolina on forecasting.*
- We are talking about a plan in 2011, so do we have the time to get all information for our plan? *EPD Response: For Coastal Georgia, Upper Savannah and Upper Ogeechee EPD is in talks with South Carolina for data as the river is a shared resource. EPD is also discussing data with Florida and their management districts. EPD is handling the talks with the neighboring states.*

#### 4) Population and Employment Forecasts

David Tanner with the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) gave an introduction. Warren Brown with Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) introduced himself and gave an introduction of the 5 population projection scenarios. Jeff Dorfman with CVIOG introduced himself and gave an introduction of the employment projections. The Planning Contractor gave a presentation and explained the importance of the input from the Local Government Advisory Board and Council members and why EPD needs input on projections. The input may help in finding fatal flaws in projection or major issues that

affect projections. The following questions/comments on methodology and preliminary results were discussed:

- Employment to Population ratio for Suwannee – Satilla seems to change between 2000 and 2050? *CVIOG Response: Ratio actually does not change much.*
- Only 5,000 employed in Agricultural and Forestry jobs in Suwannee – Satilla? Seems like there should be more. *CVIOG Response: These are GA Department of Labor counts wouldn't reflect jobs not reported to state.*
- Coffee and Tift counties – Why does Coffee catch and surpass Tift County? *CVIOG Response: Historical rates of net migration.* Follow-up question: Could it be because of the way population/employment data is distributed to counties in region? *CVIOG Response: Employment is not projected for counties specifically, just regions. Regional relationships between employment and population applied across region; then historic growth used to allocate growth across counties.*
- For the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) are we using same methodology as in other regions? *CVIOG Response: Yes in general terms. MNGWPD is taking data but maybe applying it differently.*
- In Tifton 67% of people that work in certain places don't live in Tift County and this might be effecting population projections. Need to look at this regionally.
- Why is the biggest employment growth concentrated in the Government Sector? *CVIOG Response: It is the fastest growing sector in the state in all regions. Federal government is creating more and more jobs. In Georgia public schools K-12 are also counted as government.*
- A higher percent (44%) of forecasted new population is employed than the existing population? *CVIOG Response: Based on increasing total job/population ratio over 50-yr term.*
- What is the margin of error in 2050? *CVIOG Response: For population forecasts this is not known, not statistically derived. Employment projections are still not completed, should be approximately around 5-6%*
- *CVIOG: If rates of rapid growth from 1990 are used to project, rates are probably too high. If rates of low growth from 1980 – 1990 are used to project, rates are probably too low.*

- Why is the line flat around 2040? *CVIOG Response: Originally population projections only went to 2040. Extending this forward to 2050 resulted in some issues that need to be reevaluated. It was noted that CVIOG is hosting series of projection workshops in each region in fall and will review figures in 2yrs (late 2011).*
- Are employment populations based on state-wide trends or region-wide trends? *CVIOG Response: Region-wide. Exception in retail and wholesale where state trends were also taken into consideration.*
- PC: The most important point is to plan for big picture and not exact numbers.
- PC: If we plan for the absolute worst we won't end up with a good plan.
- It would be helpful to see summaries for other regions, especially in adjacent zones. *PC Response: Planning Contractor will e-mail this information.*
- Moody Air force Base in Lowndes County, Where is that information captured? *PC Response: Group quarters populations (i.e., prisons, military bases) are calculated differently than residential populations that are detected by the US Census.*
- Are people going to move to north of Atlanta where there is no water or move to south Georgia where there is water? Move industry here and don't send water there. *EPD Response: Forecasting is based on trends; the trend is not to move where water is.*
- The State needs to encourage growth in areas that have more abundant water resources. *EPD Response: You should reflect that in your plan.*
- The Vice Chair previously called Dr. Couch about getting Agriculture Permit unit of EPD to move permit to South Georgia, from Atlanta; Dr. Couch agreed to it and implemented it. Vice Chair also agreed to previous comments about encouraging growth where water is.
- The Planning Contractor emphasized the importance to submit feedback forms to state website. Please send substitutive methodology comments to us directly.
- Following the discussion of Population and Employment there was discussion of the next meeting. Dates and locations for the next council meeting were discussed. September 18<sup>th</sup> was ruled out. The 16<sup>th</sup> of September presented a conflict for the Vice Chair. The 9<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of September were agreed as good dates.

- A Council member recommended The Inn at Bacon County and commented it would be nice and spacious enough to accommodate 70 people.

5) Introduction to Agriculture Water Demand Forecasts

Cliff Lewis, Assistant Branch Chief, EPD presented an overview of Agriculture Water Demand Forecasts for the Suwannee-Satilla Region. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Most surface water withdrawals are on small streams. There are more GW withdrawals than surface water because it's a more reliable source.
- Agricultural permits are based on maximum pump capacity, not actual volume withdrawn.
- Data being used in forecasts comes from wide variety of reliable sources.
- If user is selling water, does this need to be metered. *EPD Response: You need to think about the selling of water as a Council.*
- Is the State putting meters on withdrawals so they can charge for withdrawals? *EPD Response: No, the meters are put on to monitor permitted systems. Data used in the agricultural forecasts cannot be traced back to individual permittees; not used to set permit limits.*
- If a farmer is deciding on surface water versus ground water, he can get a surface water withdrawal for irrigation for less than 9 acres; any more than that and he needs a US Army Corp of Engineers Permit. Can we dispense with the bureaucracy that accompanies surface water permits? *EPD Response: This is outside the Council's scope, but EPD would be happy to talk to you one-on-one regarding this issue.*
- Do we have projections on expanding farm land for future food projections? *EPD Response: This is something the Council needs to think about for the region.*
- Agriculture is a major water user, but how does it compare to residential development? *EPD Response: We need to see other water uses for other land uses. The numbers for per capita water use will come from municipal and industrial projections.*
- Where do we get numbers on permits issued for industrial, municipal, agriculture, etc. water use? *EPD Response: These will be provided in future council meetings.*

- Agriculture forecasts don't include special crops like peaches and blueberries and vegetables, but specialty crop acreage was included in the baseline acreages of the agricultural forecast.
- We have to consider food safety for food crops. Wells have less chance of contamination than surface water.
- What percent of permitted pumps have been metered? *EPD Response: About 60%.*
- A comment was raised regarding permitting of portable pumps. *EPD Response: The State will drop off a meter fitted to your portable pipe.*
- Cotton, corn, soybean, and peanuts constitute 70% of all GA crops; add pecans and those all constitute 80-85% of all GA crops.
- How do we incorporate technologies that haven't yet been perfected, such as Ethanol production, Biomass plants? *EPD Response: You have local knowledge of your regions and you have to make decisions based on this knowledge.*
- Glen Behrend at EPD is managing forecasts. Are there other water intensive energy productions in State? *EPD Response: Council members should report a large water use facility, something like a biomass plant, if they know about anything like that.*
- It seems that there should be ways to reward industry and people that have reduced their footprint? *EPD Response: These mechanisms exist on local scale, not with EPD. Other Council members noted that we are doing this for the sake of future generations not rewards.*

Donny Smith was introduced to the Council. Mr. Smith is the Agricultural liaison to the Governor and he thanked the Council for their service and effort to help put together a local and state water plan.

#### 6) Modeling and Resource Assessments

The Planning Contractor presented an overview of modeling and resource assessments.

- Will modeling be done for the 5 scenarios shown in this presentation? *PC Response: Not necessarily, Council will have to pick appropriate scenarios based on the area.*

- What is the scale of GW assessments? Is it based on county boundaries? *PC Response: Assessments are based on resource boundaries. The level of detail will need to be developed and will likely be a challenge.*
- Assessments will be finished by fall, available at the beginning of 2010.
- Several years ago TMDLs were developed on rivers where the causes of impairment were natural. Point sources have largely been improved. Non-point sources could be human or background. Look at land uses around impaired water body and try to infer sources.
- EPD will see if providing TMDL formulation information to Council would be helpful in future meetings.
- In modeling consider most recent science on black water (water containing high level of tannins that alter water chemistry; common of surface waters in Suwannee-Satilla region) as we will have to deal with this problem. Is it a flow problem as opposed to point sources or NPS?

7) Visioning

The Planning Contractor presented ideas to help the Council build on creating a regional vision. The presentation provided additional insight into the interrelationship between visioning, goals/objectives and the selection of water management practices. The presentation also built on the trends, forces and factors work that was completed at Council Meeting 1. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- The Planning Contractor will assist the Council in writing the plan but the Council's plan must be based on the vision, goals/objectives that the Council identifies.
- What needs to be protected and why does it need to be protected?
- E-mail will be sent to Council reminding them to complete their homework assignment. Trends, Forces and Factors results will be included.
- Property rights are very important.
- It is important to clearly articulate what is important to the Council.

- It's clear that Council's role is to develop regional plan but remember we want a plan that works for the state as a whole; the State's Plan and Policy are not separable.
- Will the opportunity to access and evaluate statewide policy be afforded? *EPD Response: Yes if it is relevant to your water planning needs.*
- Will there be a designated place where we can submit these issues? *EPD Response: I think so, for example policy encouraging moving to water rich areas.*
- EPD: Remember your charge isn't to revise law, but don't lose the thinking process that might lead to a better solution and bring it forth in the plan.
- We need an organized process for advocating changes.

8) Public Involvement Plan

- The Public Involvement process has been more passive, meaning the public is being asked to keep informed of the process by visiting the water plan website and attending Council meetings.
- EPD wants the process to be more proactive. Suggestions included maintaining open meetings, working on getting word out on meeting announcements through press releases.
- EPD will come up with a plan in the next few weeks.
- Some Council members' constituents are asking EPD about the process.
- The Council should see the information before disseminating it to the public.
- Maybe send information to Chambers of Commerce for dissemination.

9) Agenda Item 2 Continued - MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings

The Chair asked Council members to reinitiate discussion of the MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings. A Council member expressed his view that it might be good to wait to learn if and/or why other Councils may not have signed the MOA. Another Council member indicated that, we as Council members know why we are here and that the documents are pretty straight forward and we could wordsmith these documents for a long time or get on with the work that is ahead of the Council. The Chair

called for a motion. Scott Downing moved to sign the MOA and the motion was seconded by Ben Copeland/Grady Thompson. The motion passed by majority vote with 4 dissenting votes.

10) Local Elected Official Comments

There were no local elected official comments.

11) Public Comments

Brian Taylor of GA Agribusiness Council mentioned about the Water Conservation Implementation Plan, a 187-page document, is currently in its second draft. He requested the Council to read through the document and submit comments to EPD by July 31<sup>st</sup>. The third draft will reflect the comments.

One example of a possible issue is the idea that USGS considers all irrigation as consumptive use and this is not correct, so this needs to be considered in water budgets.

Planning Contractor will email Council with a reminder and link to the website:  
[www.conservegeorgia.net](http://www.conservegeorgia.net)

Mike Copeland with the GA Farm Bureau thanked the Council for their service and mentioned to let him know if his organization could help in any way.

12) Wrap-up and Next Meeting

Council agreed to hold next meeting in Bacon County on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

13) Council Meeting 2 Evaluations

The Planning Contractor distributed two sets of evaluation forms and all members of Council filled out the forms. The Planning Contractor collected the forms. The Chair made the closing remarks and adjourned the meeting.

cc: Jeff Larson, EPD  
Cliff Lewis, EPD

**Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Council**

Council Members Attendance List

| <b>Suwannee-Satilla Council Member</b> |                      | <b>6/24/2009</b> |
|--|----------------------|------------------|
| 1                                      | Joseph L. Boyett     | X                |
| 2                                      | Earl Brice           | X                |
| 3                                      | William L. Brim      | X                |
| 4                                      | Hanson R. Carter     | X                |
| 5                                      | Carroll H. Coarsey   | X                |
| 6                                      | Ben Copeland         | X                |
| 7                                      | Scott Downing        | X                |
| 8                                      | Eugene Dyal          | X                |
| 9                                      | Darvin Eason         | X                |
| 10                                     | Michael E. Edgy      |                  |
| 11                                     | Greg C. Evans        | X                |
| 12                                     | Greg Goggans         | X                |
| 13                                     | Jim Hedges           |                  |
| 14                                     | Alva Joseph Hopkins  | X                |
| 15                                     | Donald A. Johnson    | X                |
| 16                                     | John Wesley Langdale | X                |
| 17                                     | Joe Lewis            | X                |
| 18                                     | R.R. Rusty McCall    | X                |
| 19                                     | Donald H. McCallum   | X                |
| 20                                     | Dan Raines           | X                |
| 21                                     | Scotty Raines        | X                |
| 22                                     | S. Gordon Rogers     | X                |
| 23                                     | Jay Shaw             |                  |
| 24                                     | Frank G. Sisk        | X                |
| 25                                     | Miles A. Stone       | X                |
| 26                                     | Linda Tanner         |                  |
| 27                                     | Grady M. Thompson    | X                |
| 28                                     | Doyle Weltzbarker    | X                |
| 29                                     | James R. Willis      | X                |
| 30                                     | Jackie Wilson        | X                |

*Totals*      26

Public Attendance List

| <b>Public Attendee</b> |                 | <b>6/24/2009</b> | <b>Representing</b>     |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1                      | Mike Copeland   | X                | Ga Farm Bureau          |
| 2                      | Brittney Foster | X                | Packaging Corp.         |
| 3                      | David Mairelin  | X                | Ga Farm Bureau          |
| 4                      | Jason Mallard   | X                | GSWCC                   |
| 5                      | Bryan Tolar     | X                | GA Agribusiness Council |
| 6                      | Rahn Milligan   | X                | GSWCC                   |

*Totals*      6