

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

2 Martin Luther King Jr., Dr., Suite 1152 East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Noel Holcomb, Commissioner
Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., Director
Environmental Protection Division
(404) 656-4713

April 4, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: Carol A. Couch
Director

SUBJECT: Background Information on the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan

Georgia Has A Water Plan

Governor Perdue signed Georgia's first Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan on February 6, 2008. It was developed over a three-year period with input from local governments, business owners, the agricultural community as well as the general public. Georgia's Water Plan can be downloaded at www.georgiawaterplanning.com.

The vision statement that guided the development of the Water Plan and continues to inform Plan's implementation is:

"Georgia manages water resources in a sustainable manner to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens."

Water Planning Regions

The Water Plan establishes a regional approach to guide water management in Georgia through the creation of 10 water planning regions. The first task in implementing this approach is to finalize boundaries for the 10 water planning regions. Georgia's water planning regions are shown on the map found on the last page of the Water Plan. Because the Water Plan gives counties at the border of each water planning region the opportunity to petition for reassignment to a contiguous water planning region, EPD is sending invitations to petition to the county commissions of eligible counties on April 4, 2008. Once all petitions are received, EPD and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will review these petitions and finalize the water planning region boundaries by July 16, 2008.

Regional Water Planning Council Formation

Once the regional boundaries are set, EPD will issue a formal request for nominations to the water planning councils. Each council will have 25 members: 13 appointed by the Governor, and 6 each appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House. These regional water planning councils will be called upon to draft their region's plan, called "Water Development and Conservation Plans" that will guide water management decisions in their region.

Information For Regional Councils

The regional water planning councils will be provided water resource information to assist with drafting the regional plan:

1. What are the capacities of Georgia's water resources?
 - EPD is conducting "*Resource Assessments*" to determine how much water we have in Georgia and how much pollution these waters can handle before water quality begins to degrade.
2. What are Georgia's water needs?
 - DCA, EPD, and the Department of Economic Development will cooperate with regional water planning councils to produce forecasts of future regional economies and populations, which will then be used to forecast future regional water and wastewater needs.
3. What are the available tools for meeting needs within existing and expanded capacities?
 - To meet future water supply needs, local water users will be able to choose from management practices aimed at more efficient management of future water demands, and those that increase available water supplies.
 - To meet future wastewater assimilative capacity needs, local governments will be able to choose from management practices that reduce that mass of pollutants entering streams from wastewater treatment plants and via stormwater runoff.

Using this information, the regional water planning councils will draft regional plans beginning in the spring of 2009.

Water Conservation Implementation Plan

The Water Plan recognizes that water conservation is an important, effective and efficient tool to help meet Georgia's long term water needs. To this end, the Water plan calls for the creation of a Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP) to identify actions and strategies necessary to provide for a stable and secure water supply now and in the future. Development of the WCIP will be led by a multi-agency team and will include an extensive public engagement process with the following sector specific workgroups: industrial and commercial water users; state and institutional water users; agriculture water users, municipal/public water users (outdoor and indoor use), power providers, and golf course water users. For more information on the WCIP, contact Alice Miller Keyes at 404-463-1678, alice_keyes@dnr.state.ga.us.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- Water Conservation Implementation Plan first public review: Late July, 2008
- Announcement of final water planning council boundaries: July 16, 2008
- Call for nominations for regional water planning council membership: July 18, 2008
- Announcement of regional water planning council membership: by January 1, 2009