

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354
404/675-6232
FAX: 404/675-6247

October 28, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Michelle Vincent, Water Council Liaison

SUBJECT: Regional Water Councils' Joint Meeting Agenda and Attendee List

The Regional Water Planning Councils' Joint Meeting was held Wednesday, October 6, 2010 in Macon, GA. Nearly 200 people made up of representatives from all ten planning councils and the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District were in attendance, as well as representatives from partner agencies, elected officials, and members of the general public. The meeting focused on proposed management practices and solutions to water resource issues. Four topics were discussed by panels made up of council members: Water Quality Issues: Nutrients and Assimilative Capacity, Agricultural Water Use and Availability, Water Supply Needs through 2050, and Council Coordination: Councils, Local Governments and Neighboring States.

The State Water Plan emphasizes the importance of coordination among councils for water resources that are hydrologically connected or those affected by water management activities in adjacent planning regions.

We appreciate all of our attendees' time and efforts, and hope you will join us for future Council meetings. A detailed meeting summary will be posted on Georgia Water Planning.org's homepage in the near future. Please find attached to this memo a copy of the Agenda, an Executive Summary, Detailed Panel Summaries and the Attendee list.

For questions or for more information, please contact Michelle Vincent, 404-675-1641 or michelle_vincent@dnr.state.ga.us.

Regional Water Councils Joint Meeting

October 6, 2010

Agenda

Registration (8:30 – 9:00am)

Welcome and Introductions (9:00 – 9:30am)

Panel Discussion 1 (9:30 – 10:20am)

Water Quality Issues: Nutrients and Assimilative Capacity

Panel: John Bennett, Coosa North Georgia Water Planning Council
Dennis Holder, Upper Oconee Water Planning Council
David Kubala, Metro Water Planning District
Gordon Rogers, Suwannee – Satilla Water Planning Council
Lindsay Thomas, Altamaha Water Planning Council
Phil Odom, Coastal Water Planning Council

Break (10:20 – 10:35am)

Panel Discussion 2 (10:35 – 11:45am)

Agricultural Water Use and Availability

Panel: Doyle Weltzbarker, Suwannee-Satilla Water Planning Council
John Bridges, Lower Flint – Ochlockonee Water Planning Council
Brinson Lanier, Altamaha Water Planning Council
Jim Reid, Upper Flint Water Planning Council
Tim Mercier, Coosa North Georgia Water Planning Council

Break for Lunch (11:45 – 12:45 pm)

Panel Discussion 3 (12:45 – 1:35pm)

Water Supply Needs through 2050

Panel: Steve Davis, Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Council
Cliff Arnett, Upper Flint Water Planning Council
Richard Royal, Lower Flint – Ochlockonee Water Planning Council
Pat Goran, Savannah Upper Ogeechee Water Planning Council
Ben Copeland, Jr., Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Council
Pat Graham, Upper Oconee Water Planning Council
Larry Stuber, Coastal Water Planning Council

Break (1:35 – 1:45pm)

Panel Discussion 4 (1:45 – 2:35pm)

Coordination: Councils, Local Governments and Neighboring States

Panel: Elmo Richardson, Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Council

Joe Maltese, Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Council
David Ashburn, Coosa North Georgia Water Planning Council
Charles Lambert, Metro Water Planning District
Scott MacGregor, Savannah Upper Ogeechee Water Council
Michelle Liotta, Coastal Water Planning Council

Public Comments (2:35 – 3:05pm)

Final Remarks/Wrap up (3:05 – 3:15pm)

Open House and Shared Resource Discussions (3:15 – 4:00pm)

- Shared Resource Discussions
- Opportunities for ad-hoc, subcommittees, other coordination meetings

Meeting Executive Summary

Linda MacGregor welcomed representatives from all 10 Councils, the Metro Water District, and the public. She thanked the Council members for their 15,000+ hours of volunteer service. She outlined the objectives of the joint meeting: (1) listen to each other, (2) share with each other, and (3) discover together. The goal is to identify new opportunities for coordination and/or identify new management practices not previously considered. This formal coordination is intended to augment the ongoing interactions between Councils. Linda introduced Gail Cowie, the moderator for the panel discussion.

Water Quality Issues: Nutrients and Assimilative Capacity Panel:

Panel Members: Gordon Rogers (Suwannee-Satilla Council), Dennis Holder (Upper Oconee Council), Lindsay Thomas (Altamaha Council), David Kubala (Metro Water District), John Bennett (Coosa-North Georgia Council), Phil Odom (Coastal Georgia Council)

Water Quality Challenges and Management Practices Under Consideration:

Most Councils have nonpoint source pollution and nutrient challenges that may impact future discharges. Septic system management is a concern for several regions. Agriculture and silviculture activities (important to local and state economies) have changed the landscape in several regions.

Some Councils have blackwater streams with naturally low dissolved oxygen levels. The flows in these streams can disappear during summer months, emphasizing the strong linkage between water quantity and water quality. The Coastal Georgia region has unique water quality challenges including saltwater intrusion and important fisheries.

Management practices discussed include creating storage to augment baseflows during dry periods to improve water quality. Incentives for land management practices that restore the natural hydrology and proper management of septic systems were discussed.

Agricultural Water Use and Availability Panel:

Panel Members: Gerald DeWitt (Altamaha Council), John Bridges (Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council), Doyle Weltzbarker (Suwannee-Satilla Council), Tim Mercier (Coosa-North Georgia Council), Jim Reid (Upper Flint Council)

Agricultural Water Use Challenges and Management Practices Under Consideration:

Several Councils face water availability gaps that may impact agricultural use. Agriculture relies on both groundwater and surface water to produce food for Georgians. Agriculture is very important to the economy of the state with \$11.9 billion in revenues last year, up from \$6.2 billion in 1992.

Management practice selection will need to consider existing regulations and the differences between row crops and dairy farms. Farmers are very interested in new technologies and conserving water. Studies estimate that irrigation equipment in Georgia is 80% efficient, on average. Remote monitoring is

the next technology. Many Councils have discussed encouraging/incentivizing farm ponds, conservation tillage, education and new technology to reduce water consumption as possible practices. New impoundments were discussed as a mechanism to meet flow targets during the dry months.

Water Supply Needs through 2050 Panel:

Panel Members: Ben Copeland (Middle Ocmulgee Council), Cliff Arnett (Upper Flint Council), Richard Royal (Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council), Pat Goran (Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council), Steve Davis (Middle Chattahoochee Council), Larry Stuber (Coastal Georgia Council), Pat Graham (Upper Oconee Council)

Future Water Supply Challenges and Management Practices Under Consideration:

Most Councils have small and/or localized gaps to address with management practices. There is a large gap at the Bainbridge node and challenges in the coast that are unique. The Federal operation of reservoir systems could be optimized to improve flow conditions.

Most Councils are planning to adopt water conservation, education, and development of new water supply reservoirs both to meet local gaps and for flow augmentation. One Council plans to limit Land Application Systems (LAS) to increase return flows. Interbasin transfers (IBTs) and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) are tools for specific applications. Many agreed that the Federal operation of reservoir systems should be optimized using newer technology. The Metro District has aggressive conservation; however, additional conservation and return flow augmentation may be needed in the future.

Coordination: Councils, Local Governments, and Neighboring States Panel:

Panel Members: David Ashburn (Coosa-North Georgia Council), Michelle Liotta (Coastal Georgia Council), Charles Lambert (Metro Water District), Scott MacGregor (Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council), Tony Bass (Middle Ocmulgee Council), Joe Maltese (Middle Chattahoochee Council)

Ongoing Coordination Activities and Future Coordination Activities:

The Councils have actively coordinated with neighboring Councils although most felt additional coordination was needed. Councils have coordinated closely with South Carolina and Tennessee. Many Councils have active participation from local governments. The Councils agreed that additional coordination on management practices was needed in the short time-frame available.

Closing Remarks

The Council members and public were thanked for their participation in the meeting. Linda MacGregor summarized the following points based on the meeting; the Council members expressed a deep respect for shared water resources, there are more similarities than differences between Councils; there is need for additional Council coordination; EPD anticipates insights on additional data needs in the Regional Water Plans; and long-term implementation funding is important to the Councils. The next steps for the Councils include integrating the information learned into the Draft Regional Water Plans.

Detailed Panel Summaries

Water Quality Issues Panel

Gordon Rogers, Suwannee-Satilla Council – Flint River Keeper

Dennis Holder, Upper Oconee Council – commercial fisherman

Lindsay Thomas, Altamaha Council – retired, Altamaha Planning Commission

David Kubala, Metro Water District – Cherokee Water & Sewerage Authority

John Bennett, Coosa-North Georgia Council – City Manager for Rome

Phil Odom, Coastal Georgia Council - Ogeechee-Canoochee RiverKeeper

Gail Cowie asked the panelists to describe their Council and some of the main water quality issues.

David Kubala - The Metro Water District has struggled for many years with nutrient and assimilative capacity issues. Limited assimilative capacity for nutrients has resulted in stricter treatment standards, increasing treatment costs. Septic tanks and disposal of septage are concerns in the Metro Water District.

John Bennett –There are 3 major lakes with nutrient standards; Carter, Weiss, and Allatoona (not inside the Council but the Council is upstream). Most of the challenges in the Coosa-North Georgia region are related to nonpoint source pollution (70-80 percent).

Dennis Holder – The Upper Oconee Council includes Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair, and the Oconee River. There are several streams on the 303(d) list and improving quality in these streams will be important. The Council is considering reuse water opportunities for industries to help address water quality challenges.

Lindsay Thomas – There are several blackwater streams in the Altamaha region with low (or no) flow during the summer. Due to the blackwater streams water quality and water quantity challenges are closely linked. The management of the land and forests impacts stream flows.

Phil Odom – Coastal Georgia is unique as they have saltwater and a number of important estuaries that comprise 70% of the fisheries in the state. Most of the streams are blackwater streams with naturally low dissolved oxygen levels that have been aggravated by land use changes. For the Coastal Georgia Council, addressing water quantity gaps will help address water quality gaps.

Gail Cowie reiterated that these management practices are still choices and that most of the Councils have not yet settled on specific management practices. Gail Cowie asked the panelists to outline what types of management practices are being considered to address issues.

Dennis Holder - The Council has discussed the concept of capturing water in the flatlands, treating the water, and then injecting the water back into the aquifer to address saltwater intrusion; a practice used heavily in the western U.S. The Council hopes that the Regional Water Plan will improve habitat degraded due to land use practices.

Lindsay Thomas – The Altamaha Council is considering a range of BMPs to address nonpoint source pollution. Lindsay added that he is concerned about the cumulative impact of the small stream reaches on overall water quality and hopes that the State Water Plan analyzes water quality considering the impacts from small streams as well as the major streams.

John Bennett - The Council will focus on the largest sources of nonpoint sources of pollution, focusing on potential sources in the upper Etowah basin (both inside and outside of the Council). The Council is concerned with erosion and sedimentation. The Council hopes to focus on the less expensive sources of pollution instead of paying for the next increment of wastewater treatment.

Phil Odom – The Council is discussing incentives for land management practices that restore the hydrology. The Council is also discussing the future role of LAS and septic systems. The Council plans to recommend more frequent and encompassing stream monitoring. Reuse water is an option that is also being considered. The Council is concerned with funding.

David Kubala – Regional water plans will evolve as better data is available. Strong coordination is needed to understand shared resource challenges; now and into the future. Consistency in water quality requirements throughout the Metro Water District has been important. David added that nutrient trading is a water management practice that has been discussed with EPD but has not been implemented in the Metro Water District yet.

Gordon Rogers – The Suwannee-Satilla Council is considering incentives for additional agriculture and silviculture BMPs in addition to practices mentioned by other Councils. Supplementing baseflows in the summer months will be important; therefore, the Council is considering the use of LAS, practices to support baseflows, and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). The management practice committee is working to carefully balance the responsibility for implementation among all water users.

Questions to the Water Quality Panel:

Cliff Arnett, Upper Flint Council – One of the big issues in the Upper Flint Council is sediment from poorly maintained dirt roads. He asked if other Councils share this concern.

Gordon Rogers: The Suwannee-Satilla has 1,200 miles of dirt roads and have discussed dirt road maintenance in detail. The BMPs have not been identified yet to address this issue.

Phil Odom: Additional water quality monitoring will help identify the source of the sediment. The Council will need to identify management practices to prevent “mud boils” or excess sediments can smother oyster reefs.

Gerald Webb, Altamaha Council – He asked if the panel members were comfortable in the quality of the data for planning. The Altamaha Council feels that more data is needed to make good decisions.

Gordon Rogers - The Suwannee-Satilla Council doesn't think that 7Q10 is an appropriate minimum instream flow standard. Looking forward, the Council would like technical guidance on flow restoration

(or water volume trading). Looking backwards, the Council has asking questions as needed and spreading the management practices over all water users.

John Bennett – Each Council has wrestled with data concerns. The Coosa-North Georgia Council has discussed that this is the first round of planning. The Regional Water Plan will include a work plan to outline future data collection needs.

David Kubala – Cherokee County found through a local monitoring effort that many of the streams classified as impaired for fecal coliform bacteria were not impaired based on new sampling data. He recommends monitoring to confirm the impairment before spending funds on water management practices. EPD has limited funds for monitoring and spends them wisely.

Larry McSwain, Middle Ocmulgee Council – Functional streamside buffers are one of the best ways to address water quality issues. Buffers can be politically contentious, especially in growing communities. He asked whether other Councils were considering buffer requirements to protect water quality.

John Bennett – Responded that stream buffers are being strongly considered by the Coosa-North Georgia Council.

Lindsay Thomas – Stream buffers are being considered by the Altamaha Council. The Council feels that economic development opportunities are tied to proper management of water resources. Proper water resources management can include building very expensive man-made treatment facilities or protecting stream areas to protect the natural systems.

Agricultural Water Use and Availability

Gerald DeWitt, Altamaha Council– Jessup City Council

John Bridges, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council – farmer

Doyle Weltzbarker,– Suwannee-Satilla Council– dairy farmer

Tim Mercier, Coosa-North Georgia Council – apple farmer

Jim Reid, Upper Flint Council – famer and consultant (irrigation and waste management)

Gail Cowie explained that agriculture is very important to state and regional economies. Water is critical for agricultural production, but in some areas there are resource limits that may constrain use. The panel members were asked to explain how their Council is balancing demands with availability.

Gerald DeWitt – Altamaha region is rural and agrarian. Most of the municipal demand is from the Upper Floridan aquifer, which is sufficient to meet current and future needs. Most of the agricultural water supply is from surface water. There are no gaps on the Altamaha River, but there are gaps on the Satilla, the Canoochee, and the Ogeechee below the Conoochee. The Council is considering practices to close these gaps.

John Bridges – The Lower Flint-Ochlockonee region is heavily agricultural, outside of the military operations near Albany. The lower part of the Flint basin relies on groundwater from the Dougherty Plain. During drought, streams run dry because of groundwater withdrawals. There will be greater demands on agriculture to become more efficient over time, which will affect profit margins.

Doyle Weltzbarker – Water is critical to agriculture which is critical to feeding Georgia residents. Farmers use water efficiently because it is expensive to operate pumps. According to the Georgia Agribusiness Council, there were \$11.9 billion in revenues last year, up from \$6.2 billion in 1992. The benefit is approximately \$65 billion when the jobs farms provide are considered.

Tim Mercier – In the Coosa-North Georgia region, the impact of agriculture is pretty minor. Currently, there is plenty of water to meet the needs. Farmers are aware of their impact on the environment and embrace technology. The United States feeds more people per land area than other countries because of this efficiency. The need for food and water cannot be separated.

Jim Reid – In the Upper Flint, agriculture south of Americus relies on groundwater and north of Americus relies on surface water. The northern portion of the basin has beef cattle, pork, and tree crops (peaches and pecans), while the southern portion is mainly row crops. It is very expensive to irrigate. The old pivot systems used high impact nozzles that were only 70-71% efficient. The new pivot systems are 90 – 91% efficient, so less water is lost to wind or evaporation. Studies have estimated that overall Georgia farmers are 80% efficient. The operating pressure has also been dropped from 80 to 25 pounds per square inch; improving both water and energy efficiency. The next wave of technology is remote monitoring, which is currently being used in west Texas.

Gail Cowie asked the panel members to outline the choices that their Councils are considering to meet agricultural demands given the available resources.

Gerald DeWitt – The Altamaha Council plans to recommend more monitoring to understand the gaps better so that funds on management practices are spent wisely. Education programs are a priority for the Council; for agriculture as well as for municipal users. The Council will likely encourage farmers to adopt new and more efficient technology where possible. This technology must be coupled with education, general public support, and funding. The Council has also discussed the need to reclaim wetlands that were previously drained. Land application systems and stormwater management are also being discussed.

John Bridges – There has been a lot of research on water efficiency. The young farmers are more knowledgeable and using more efficient farming techniques.

Doyle Weltzbarker – Farmers are business people, and efficiency positively affects profits. The Council is considering water management practices, but needs to recognize that practices for row crops will not necessarily apply to dairy farmers. There are many existing regulations on fertilizer application, waste management and disposal, etc. Most farmers have ponds to settle solids from runoff. Conservation tillage is an important practice.

Tim Mercier – Agricultural water use is not consumptive. The pivot system irrigation is the most efficient and much of what is applied recharges the aquifer. The new drip systems are very effective and the Council will likely encourage the variable rates systems where appropriate. Alternate sources of irrigation water, such as surface ponds, may not be allowed under new FDA regulations regarding the quality of water used to irrigate food. Technology and water delivery will be important in the future.

Jim Reid – The Upper Flint Council plans to recommend new technologies, where appropriate. There is a large gap at the Bainbridge node. New impoundments to store water during the winter months to augment flows in the summer months would narrow this gap.

Gail Cowie asked if there were any questions for the panel members or comments from other Councils.

Haddy Hudgins, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council – Stated that agriculture is not 100% consumptive. He commented that the consumptive use of irrigation needs further study.

Gail Cowie summarized that there was interest in using farm ponds for flow augmentation as well as other purposes. She appreciated the discussion that farm ponds are good or bad; they need to be carefully designed, constructed, and managed. There are a number of areas where Councils will recommend collecting additional information, including better information about consumption.

Water Supply Needs through 2050

Ben Copeland, Middle Ocmulgee Council – farmer, grass, pecans, row crops

Cliff Arnett, Upper Flint Council – Columbus Water Works

Richard Royal, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council – retired legislature in 2008, Jekyll Island Authority

Pat Goran, Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council – Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Steve Davis, Middle Chattahoochee Council – Columbus Water Works

Larry Stuber, Coastal Georgia Council – retired engineer, City of Savannah City Council

Pat Graham, Upper Oconee Council - Former Mayor of Braselton

All of the regions plan on using more water in the future. Gail Cowie asked the panel members to share how their Council will meet needs within the sustainable capacity of the resource.

Pat Graham – The Upper Oconee region has small, localized gaps in the upper portion of the region. Reservoirs and conservation may be considered to address the gaps in these regions.

Larry Stuber – The Coastal Georgia Council current needs are met with 60% groundwater and 40% surface water. Due to saltwater intrusion issues, the mix will likely change in the future. The Council is confident they will be able to select management practices to meet any gaps.

Steve Davis – The Council is planning for local gaps, including wide fluctuations in water levels in West Point Lake. The Council will urge the Corps to optimize the ACF system management as part of the ongoing Water Control Plan update. A Georgia Tech study outlines different operations that allow the basin to recover after drought.

Pat Goran – There is a relatively small gap in Upper Ogeechee which can be resolved by limiting surface water withdrawals and using groundwater. Aware of the downstream Coastal Georgia Council concerns with Lake Hartwell, as the lake levels vary dramatically. With the downstream needs in the Savannah basin, he recommends adjusting current operations to maintain lake levels in the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee region so that water is available for downstream needs during drought.

Richard Royal – There is a large gap at the Bainbridge node in the Lower Flint River. On an average annual basis, 75% of the water use in the region is agricultural use. Even if agricultural water usage is eliminated, only half of the gap is addressed. The Council is making tough choices considering conservation, implementation of the Flint River Drought Management Plan, groundwater, and new reservoirs. All of the management practices are in the toolbox and currently trying to identify what tools are viable.

Cliff Arnett – The Upper Flint Council has already identified management practices. There is not a gap at Montezuma, but the Upper Flint Council recognizes the challenges at the Bainbridge node in the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee region. Interbasin transfers (IBTs) may be a viable tool in some areas. LAS should be used as a last resort and not the preferred method of discharge. The Council is formally requesting a reservoir study in the upper Flint basin, realizing that the topography in the lower Flint basin is not as well suited to reservoirs. The Council feels that the Corps Operating Plan needs to realistically look at

flows needed to sustain endangered species as studies show it is significantly less than the current 5,000 cfs that is released.

Ben Copeland – The Middle Ocmulgee Council may have a gap in the Cretaceous aquifer. There are some localized needs for reservoirs, such as in Newton County. The Metro Water District is going to have significant water challenges in the future and Ben asked how they plan to meet their needs.

Gail Cowie asked how other Councils and the Metro Water District plan to meet their future needs.

Brad Currey, Metro Water District – The Metro Water District has the most aggressive water conservation program in the state and region but will need additional water supply in the future. Additional conservation and return flow augmentation may be needed in the future. He hopes that the Corps and Federal government consider consumption and not just withdrawals.

Brant Keller, Upper Flint Council – He is concerned about the funding for Regional Water Plan implementation. Converting LAS sites to discharges is expensive and many communities invested in LAS sites based on EPD guidance. Funding will be a challenge, especially to some of the smaller systems.

David Kubala, Metro Water District – Asked for clarification regarding the management of the large reservoirs in the Flint and Chattahoochee Basins.

Pat Goran – The Savannah River basin can be better managed to benefit all users. The adaptive management approach combined with better available technology can design better release schemes. Currently, releases are made regardless of needs downstream. The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee region wants to work with the Coastal Georgia Council, South Carolina, and others.

Richard Royal – The confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Flint River form the Apalachicola River. Any improvements to the operation of Chattahoochee reservoirs will minimize the gap at the Montezuma node in the Lower Flint basin.

Cliff Arnett – Offstream and instream storage need to be considered. New LAS systems should only be allowed as a last resort, but that existing LAS sites would not be forced to convert.

Larry McSwain, Middle Ocmulgee Council – He asked how Councils plan to move forward given their concerns about the accuracy of the modeling data and whether a gap exists.

Steve Davis – The Middle Chattahoochee Council is concerned that the revisions to the Corps Operations Plan, which is the basis for the models and will change the gaps. If the Operations Plan changes dramatically, then the Regional Water Plan will need to be revised. Planning is dynamic, and the Council is writing the best Regional Water Plan with the available data.

Pat Graham – The resource assessments were reliable for the Upper Oconee Council. Just as the Metro Water District has done; plan with the best data and then refine with better data every 5 years or as it becomes available.

Richard Royal – The Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council had some concerns over the results for Southwest Georgia and the responsibility to reduce the large gap. The Council closely reviewed the models and the assumptions in detail and the Council cannot eliminate the gap within the planning horizon.

Pat Goran – The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council was happy with the resource assessments. The Council is concerned that there is an economic gap. A capital improvement project (CIP) list will need to be developed for the local governments with funding needs.

Gail Cowie asked the panel members to talk about any specific management practices that they are considering.

Pat Graham – The Upper Oconee Council is considering water conservation measures in addition to the Water Stewardship Act, education, the expansion of existing reservoirs, opportunities for wastewater treatment return and reuse, and some new water supply sources in the upper portion of the Council.

Larry Stuber – The Coastal Georgia Council is considering a regional groundwater authority to coordinate groundwater development, additional surface water for the City of Savannah, water conservation, aquifer storage and recover (ASR), optimizing aquifer use, and upstream storage. Larry recommended merging the Regional Water Plans into an overall statewide plan that focuses on balancing water availability with unmet demands between Councils.

Steve Davis – The Middle Chattahoochee Council is considering public education, a reservoir siting study to identify opportunities for new and/or augmented storage, possible development of storage recommended in the study, and the use of farm ponds. The Middle Chattahoochee Council also plans to advocate for changes in the Corps Operations Plan with a focus on consumptive use versus withdrawals.

Pat Goran – The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council is considering water conservation and efficiency measures as appropriate, and advocating for changes to the Corps operations plan for the 3 reservoirs.

Richard Royal – Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council has asked for a three month extension. Currently, there is a limit on new agricultural withdrawal permits. The Lower Flint-Ochlockonee would like to see more studies on interbasin transfers and new reservoirs.

Cliff Arnett – The Upper Flint Council is considering Tier 1 and Tier 2 water conservation measures with incentives in addition to existing municipal and industrial water conservation efforts. The Upper Flint Council is considering the cost-benefit of management practices and long-term funding.

Ben Copeland – The Middle Chattahoochee Council needs more clarification on Tier 2 water conservation measures specifically for agriculture and whether EPD will tie these practices to permits. The Middle Ocmulgee Council will recommend additional planning nodes as there is currently only one planning node in the region.

Coordination: Councils, Local Governments and Neighboring States

David Ashburn, Coosa-North Georgia Council – County Administrator and Water and Sewer Manager for Walker County

Michelle Liotta, Coastal Georgia Council – Georgia Pacific Environmental Manager

Charles Lambert, Metro Water District – DeKalb County Water and Sewer

Scott MacGregor, Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council – public affairs consultant

Tony Bass, Middle Ocmulgee Council – landscaping industry

Joe Maltese, Middle Chattahoochee Council – retired

Gail Cowie asked panel members to share coordination with Councils and those who will be responsible for implementing elements of the Regional Water Plans.

Joe Maltese – The leadership for the Middle Ocmulgee Council has worked closely to coordinate with these stakeholders.

David Ashburn – The Coosa-North Georgia Council has had some informal conversations in addition to participation in the formal EPD joint meetings.

Scott MacGregor – The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council has had some informal conversations in addition to participation in the formal EPD joint meetings.

Charles Lambert – The Metro Water District has participated in the planning process as requested.

Michelle Liotta – The Coastal Georgia Council is very engaged with South Carolina, with regards to the Savannah Harbor TMDL and saltwater intrusion in the Hilton Head and Savannah areas. South Carolina has recently formed a planning commission and representatives attend both meetings.

David Ashburn – The Coosa-North Georgia Council has a number of shares resources with North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and eventually with Florida – so there are many opportunities for coordination. The Metro Water District, the Corps, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) have spoken at Council meetings.

Gail Cowie asked the panel members to share what activities have led to good and/or poor interactions.

Michelle Liotta – The Coastal Georgia Council has had several successful open and honest dialogue with stakeholders, especially through the Savannah Harbor TMDL. The saltwater intrusion stakeholders meetings are just starting, and will likely be more challenging. The Council is concerned about the limited time remaining for coordination and is also concerned about funding challenges.

Tony Bass – The Middle Ocmulgee Council has focused on involvement with the water utilities within the Council through technical subcommittees. The largest water provider in the region, Macon Water Authority, is represented on the Council. The interactions with the utilities have been very helpful.

Charles Lambert – The Metro Water District has knowledgeable staff, including Pat Stevens, who facilitate coordination and act as a clearinghouse to keep the water providers informed. A good relationship with EPD has also been helpful.

Joe Maltese – The coordination between the Middle Chattahoochee Council and Alabama and Florida have been limited due to the ongoing legal challenges. The new ACF Stakeholders Group may provide an opportunity for coordination; it does not seem to be politically motivated. Alabama has still not provided water demand information which makes planning difficult because there are some important water users with needs that need to be met.

David Ashburn – The Coosa-North Georgia Council has been successful through open communication with businesses and other Councils. Water and wastewater providers participate in subcommittee meetings and the Council has talked with Tennessee. The Council wants to meet the needs of the community and people, regardless of their locations.

Scott MacGregor – The Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Council is actively coordinating with South Carolina and other Councils on a number of issues; Savannah Harbor TMDL, lake management, and others. Personal relationships have helped. The water utilities participate actively in the planning process, in part because over half of the Council works for or manages a water utility.

Gail Cowie asked if there were comments from the audience.

Rick Gardner, Coastal Georgia Council –He commented that there needs to be a statewide effort to knit together the management practices from different regions to make sure the needs of each basin are met. He suggested that a subcommittee for each major basin with representatives from each Council.

Charles Lambert, Metro Water District – The Metro Water District has Basin Advisory Councils (BACs) that look at basin issues and the Technical Coordinating Committees (TCCs) involve the utility members.

Tony Bass, Middle Ocmulgee Council – Expressed his concern over the recent Judge Magnusson ruling. Georgia has 50-inches of rain per year, so it appears that much of the state needs storage to secure reliable supply. Identifying funding for the Regional Water Plans will be important.

Joe Maltese, Middle Chattahoochee Council – Commented that there are innovative solutions and technologies to resolve the tri-state challenges. The ACF needs to consider ecology, human, and industry needs. While progress is being made, there are still uncertainties regarding plans of Metro Water District, Lower Flint-Ochlockonee region, and Alabama.

Gail Cowie wrapped up thanking everyone. The need to knit things together at boundaries and along resource lines is an important point.

Public Comment

Todd Edwards, ACCG – He praised the progress throughout the State. Several Council members expressed the need for funding for future planning and implementation efforts. EPD's budgets and staff have been cut. GEFA's Georgia Fund and not the General Assembly have funded most of this round of planning. He encouraged the attendees to ensure that a sustainable funding source is identified for future planning efforts. If funds from permit fees or fees per population are deposited into a State Trust Fund, they may be used to balance the budget in tough economic times. The State Trust Funds are not sustainable.

Sarah Barzack, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy High Risk Energy – She expressed concerns that the energy forecasts were not shared at this meeting. Energy is the largest water user in the state and there are concerns about planning without their demands. Future energy source decisions will have a big impact on water use and quality of life. She asked several questions regarding the timing of the release and availability of the forecast and assumptions to the public.

Dave Hetzel, City of Tifton – He commented that communication is vitally important. He asked if the draft baseline resource assessments and preliminary forecast of water and wastewater needs had been provided to the Councils. Gail Cowie confirmed that we are on track.

Ellen Corry – She asked when energy forecasts will be available. Plant Ben Hill will be a significant change to the Suwannee-Satilla region and they will need this forecast to create their Regional Water Plan.

Linda responded that the power forecasts are underway but there have been complications. The forecasts are close to complete and will be provided to the Councils by the end of October 2010. This information will represent the water needed for electric demands for the state of Georgia through 2050.

Closing Remarks

Gail Cowie thanked the participants for their thoughts and said she learned new information today.

Linda MacGregor made some closing remarks and invited everyone to attend the open house. Linda thanked the Council members for their role in the planning process, sharing today, and for the input from the public members and attendees.

1. The Council members expressed a deep respect for the diverse and wonderful water resources throughout the State
2. The Councils have more similarities than differences; although there are some site specific issues that pertain only to specific Councils.
3. There are still needs for follow-up discussions between Councils or between sub-committees of Councils. She encouraged these ongoing communications through participation in Council meetings or other methods of sharing.
4. EPD expects and welcomes insights on priorities for additional data gathering. Placing the data requests in priority order will help EPD identify and allocate funding.

5. Identifying funding for long-term implementation and planning is important.

The next steps including continuing Council activities and hopefully incorporating information learned from this meeting.

Attendee List

Altamaha Water Planning Council

Gerald DeWitt
Jim Free
Edward F. Jeffords
Buddy Pittman
Lindsay Thomas

Lower Flint Water Planning Council

Richard Royal
Hal Haddock
Huddy Hudgens
John Bridges
Jerry Lee

Coastal Georgia Water Planning Council

Rick Gardner
William K. Guthrie
Michelle L. Liotta
John D. McIver
Michael J. Melton
Phil Odom
Keith F. Post
Larry M. Stuber

Metro Water District

Brad Currey
David Kubala
Katie Kirkpatrick
Charles Lambert
Guy Pihera
Gerald Pouncey
Pat Stevens

Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning Council

David Ashburn
John Bennett
Kelly Cornwell
Haynes Johnson
Sherry Loudermilk
Tim Mercier
Lamar Paris

Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Council

Matt Windom
Harry Lange
Jimmy Knight
Robie Vork
Steve Davis
Joe Maltese
Jim Woods

Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Council

Tony Bass

Ben Copeland

Lawrence McSwain

Barry Peters

Committee Members

Mike Hopkins

Lauren Mitchell

Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Planning Council

Bruce Azevedo

Ron Cross

Donald Dye

Patrick Goran

Scott MacGregor

Eddie Madden

Charles Newton

Tenia Workman

Committee Members

Frank Carl

Sam Booher

Adrienne Wood

Suwanee-Satilla Water Planning Council

Scott Downing

Darvin Eason

S. Gordon Rogers

Doyle Weltzbarker

Jackie Wilson

Upper Oconee Water Planning Council

Charles Armentrout

Richard Bentley

Roger Folsom

Linda Gantt

Pat Graham

Danny Hogan

Dennis Holder

Upper Flint Water Planning Council

Lamar Perlis

Buddy Leger

Cliff Arnett

Brant Keller

Frank Keller

Jim Reid

Mike Beres

Public Attendees:

James Emery, Troup County

Randy Hartmann, ACCG

Paula Feldman

Joe Krewer, DCA

Jed Evans

Russ England

Bruce Wilson

Katherine Helms Cummings

Brent Dykes, GSWCC

Sam Krishnan, City of Atlanta

Kelly Siragusa

Ken Sheets, Bibb County

Bryan Tolar

Lance Renfrow, RVRC

Bob Rychel, MCRC

Matt Poyner, MEDC

Larry Vickery

Dieter Franz

Ernest Earn, Cobb County Water

Stacey Isaac Berahzer, UNC

Kathy Mulvey

Mary Gazaway, EPD

John Clark, USGS

Patti Lanford

Gary Duck

Jeffrey Jarvey

Deatre Denion, DCA

Les Ager

Rob McDowell, CVIOG

Neill Herring

Frank Redmond

Kevin Kelly, GEFA

Greg Mason, GEFA

Mark Wyzalek, Macon Water Authority

Todd Edwards, ACCG

Harold West

Lorraine Campagne

Sonny Timmerman

Mary Kay Woodworth

Deron Davis

Roger Martin

Brandon Ashley

William T. Austin

Skip Langley, Senator Isakson's Office

Shaun Oliver, City of Vidalia

Marvin Lee

Helen Rogers

Sam Rogers

Dave Hetzel, City of Tifton

Russell Topping, GSWCC

Sara Barczak

Brad Baugh

Will Berson

Laura Hartt

EPD Staff:

Linda MacGregor

Gail Cowie

Nap Caldwell

Kevin Farrell

Tim Cash

Becky Champion

Jeff Larson

Cliff Lewis

Glen Behrend

Sue Levin

Michelle Vincent

Ted Hendrickx

Bill Morris

Brian Baker

Mary Gazaway

Mork Winn

Contractors:

Kim Shorter

Brian Skeens

Doug Baughman

David Ashley

Tai-Yi Su

Steve Simpson

Kristin Rowles

Katherine Zitsch

Rick Brown

Brian Keel

Jim Hawkins

Mark Masters

Doug Wilson