

Memorandum

To: Coastal Georgia Regional Water Planning Council

From: Sue Morea and Rick Brown

Date: 5/19/09

Subject: Council Meeting 1 - Summary

This memorandum summarizes the meeting of the Coastal Georgia Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 1 on May 4, 2009.

1) Welcome and Introductions/Approve Agenda

The Coastal Georgia EPD Representative and Planning Consultants (CDM) introduced themselves to the members of the Water Planning Council. Council members introduced themselves to EPD, the Planning Consultants, and each other. Public attendees introduced themselves to the group. The Planning Consultant proposed some changes to the order of the Agenda and the Council approved them.

2) Kickoff Meeting Evaluation

The Planning Consultant presented the summary of results of the evaluation forms from the Kickoff Meeting. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

3) Water Planning Process Presentation

The Planning Consultant presented an introduction to the Water Planning process. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Under other water planning councils, in reviewing the literature, there doesn't seem to be any specific recommendations for accomplishing coordination with other councils. If something comes up, will someone go meet with other councils and solve that problem as opposed to having a process already setup to manage that conflict? There will be problems, and there is no management mechanism that's positive to accomplish that. *Response from EPD: There will be guidance. Yes, that is part contract. There is a suite of guidance to use in deliberations as we move through those issues. There is also training on how to use and think about those management practices and how you'll use them to resolve those issues. Those kind of issues*

is a little ahead of where we are right now, but as move through process those things will come in and we'll have them to use (for example – interbasin transfer) – those things will be shuffled out as we move more seriously into planning process.

Follow-up from CDM: We also have a series of joint meetings in the overall agenda. We need to get to know each other before we start talking to other councils. If there are specific issues we need to get on our radar, let us know which councils and which issues so we'll be ready.

Follow-up from EPD: EPD's responsibility is to facilitate discussions between councils. EPD can broker and facilitate with CDM to get those common issues resolved.

- *My concern is that we have 10-11 regional councils developing these plans. If these plans do not add up to 1 game plan, then we will have failed. I want this to be a success. Response from CDM: CDM is working with the Altamaha and Suwannee-Satilla councils, so this will help with regional coordination as we see issues between them. Overall coordination will also be important.*
- *We also share a border with South Carolina (SC) and with Florida (FL). How are we going to deal with that? Response from EPD: For example, we will be talking with SC real soon on how their data can be used in our planning process. Right now we are data gathering and forecasting on how they're using their part of the river. Those interstate processes are in play in periphery to this. We will use more of the data process going into modeling.*

Follow-up from Council member: As a follow up on earlier comment about communication between regional councils, I don't see ourselves getting too far off track from one another.

- *One question: I know that we've been divided in regional councils based on political boundaries rather than watershed areas. Was there consideration given to breaking into watershed areas? Wondering if we created another step or hurdle? Response from CDM: There is always a trade-off between looking at cities/counties versus watersheds. Planners tend to deal with cities and counties, where there community is, forecasting for that community, and knowing where watersheds cross over. We've given thought to all of that. We've teamed with Arcadis on the surface water piece and that will help us deal with upstream and downstream issues.*

Follow-up from EPD: We got a lot of comments that many existing relationships would be divided (planning regions, other host of considerations) if setup by watershed. By arbitrarily cutting some of this stuff, it would be more anti-productive than productive. So, we made the councils as you see them now knowing that we'll talk to each other and that we share the river. We thought that was better use of time in informing councils rather than long stretches of governments that haven't talked to each other.

- Shouldn't we also deal with groundwater quality? *Response from EPD: Saltwater intrusion in the Upper Floridan Aquifer is a quality issue we're dealing with in the modeling.*
- Miocene, too. *Response from EPD: We will discuss that and have it considered.*
- Has Carl Vinson Institute started this effort and what is the schedule? *Response from CDM: We will talk about that this afternoon. We will have more data at next meeting and wrap-up at the third meeting.*
- On the public involvement plan, how do you expect to get the public involved beyond just public officials? *Response from EPD: There will be a plan to get stakeholders. The public will be involved through comments on the deliberations at each meeting. That is the chief way we're going to get public involvement and comments on the process. We are not envisioning separate stakeholder groups going out. This council is the council. The public needs to understand that they need to bring their concerns to the council. The beauty of that is that those things are taken up, summarized, and ultimately deliberated on and hopefully come into play in your decision making. I can't tell you exactly how future will be; that will evolve through time.*

Follow-up from CDM: There is a public comment period on agenda. Another thing to think about as council members and as issues come up, is to get your public involved and to the meetings.

- Referencing the inconsistency portion to which you eluded to, each city and county has, or is upgrading, their own comprehensive plan. Does EPD have a comprehensive plan for the whole state? Is it broken down and reviewed for inconsistencies within cities and counties. *Response from Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA): When submitting a comprehensive plan, DCA looks at inconsistencies between cities and counties. We now have regional commissions that will need to help with that as well. You guys have already been working. Four have coastal comprehensive plans and we have a starting point with that. We know inconsistencies exist because several of you have sat on the committee. We need to work on others.*

4) MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings Presentation

EPD made a presentation on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Under operating procedures, just to be clear, quorum is 13? *Response from CDM: Yes.*
- If there are only 12 here, then alternate members can vote to get to quorum? *Response from CDM: yes.*
- But under no other circumstances would an alternate vote? *Response from CDM: Correct.*

5) Operating Procedures/Rules for Meetings Broad Issue Areas Exercise

The Council members engaged in an interactive review of the operating procedures/rules for meetings. The exercise involved breaking into 6 work groups with each work group reviewing and offering their perspective on specific sections of the documents. An overview of each groups work is provided below.

Work Group 1 proposed the following revisions:

- If ex-officio Council members are voting, they need to have the same attendance as other Council members.
- Regarding resignations/vacancies, alternates should fill spots vacated by Council members. A new appointee, voted on by the majority of all members or receiving the majority vote of present members, will become a new alternate.
- The 2/3 majority should be changed to a simple majority for Council work and to restart discussions. Some members would like to allow remote voting.
- The terms of the Chair and Vice Chair should be changed from 6 months to 1 year, with an option for re-election after 1-year. The Council should retain the right to terminate either the Chair or Vice Chair after six months.
- There need to be ties between the Water Planning Council and the Regional Commissions within the geography. Ex-officio member and RWPC Chair/Vice Chair should participate in RCs.

Work Group 2 offered the following comments:

- There was a discussion surrounding whether all discussion should be captured in meeting minutes or whether meeting summaries with Q/A and public comment can be provided. The council is in favor of a meeting summary, but council

members must note formally if they are not in agreement with a item moving forward, and this should be reflected in the minutes/summary. In general the council indicated that it was important that meeting summaries highlight/document when a council decision is made.

- All meetings should be open to the public.
- They propose no changes.
- The role of alternates seems unclear to them.

Work Group 3 offered the following comments and proposed revisions:

- Should alternates attend all meetings and have full participation rights including voting? They need clarification on what being an alternate means.
- A Council member should be removed from the Council if they miss 2 consecutive meetings.
- Public participation should be limited to 30 minutes at the end of each meeting. Written public comments should be provided to Council members as part of pre-meeting packet.
- We need meetings with the public to present the plan process as we move through it.

Work Group 4 offered the following comments and proposed revisions:

- The Council needs the agenda 7 days in advance of meetings. Proposed agenda additions should be included at the end of the agenda.
- Councils should be provided a summary of the previous meeting's minutes to include a written record of discussions and actionable items.
- A "Consent Agenda" should be included in the minutes.
- Rule 4a in Rules for Meetings: The agenda should "include a checklist of intended results." Change to "objectives."
- The document should be softened with "mays" instead of "wills."

- There should not be a specific time limit for each discussion topic. The Chair/Vice Chair/Planning Consultant should set guidelines per topic.

Work Groups 5 and 6 offered the following comments and proposed revisions:

- If there is a proposed addition to the agenda, should it require a vote? It could be at the discretion of the Chair? If the Chair says no, there should be a procedure with the Council. A motion to 2nd should not be required. Clarify that this is meant for the original agenda.
- Letters A-F are incorrectly ordered in the Work Group 5 section.
- Public notice/comment should be limited to 30 minutes and should be written and made part of the official record. All public comments (except those that are unforeseen) should be submitted in writing at least 7 days in advance of the Council meeting with the pre-documents sent to Council members.
- The Chair or Council should be empowered regarding public involvement special roles.

6) Regional Geography, Facilities, and Resources Overview Presentation

The Planning Consultant presented an overview of Regional Geography, Facilities, and Resources for the Suwannee-Satilla Region. It was pointed out that there is more than one surface water treatment permit in the Coastal region. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

7) Website Capabilities Presentation

The Planning Consultant presented the capabilities of the State Water Planning website with a live internet demonstration. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

8) Consensus Building Exercise

Council members completed the Consensus Building Exercise without questions or comments.

9) Population and Employment Forecasting Presentation

The Planning Consultant presented an introduction to population and employment forecasting. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

10) Trends, Forces, and Factors Exercise

The Planning Consultant broke the Council into two groups and explained the Trends, Forces, and Factors Exercise. Each Council member wrote down what he or she thought were the 5 most important factors affecting water in their region. The two groups posted their ideas on opposite walls and sorted them into groups. With help from the Planning Consultant, a representative from each group developed a statement that encompassed each group of ideas. A summary of the results is provided below.

Technology

- Desalination
- Upgrade of Infrastructure/Treatment Plants
- Reuse for Wastewater (Purple Pipe)
- Wastewater to Drinkability Standards
- Groundwater Recharge

Political

- Development of Infrastructure
- Lack of Adequate Regional Planning
- External Challenges to Our Water Supply
- Regulatory/Public Perception of Impacts
- Cap and Trade
- Regional Reservoirs
- Downstream from Everyone

Social

- Education
- In Migration (Population Growth)
- Shift from Industrial to Residential
- Wastewater Plants vs. Septic
- Incompatible Land Uses

Environment

- Reuse of Water to Prolong Groundwater Resources
- Greater Use of Surface Water
- Groundwater Recharge
- Land Use
- Saltwater Intrusion
- Hurricane Protection

- Maintaining Navigable Channels/Dredging
- TMDL Allocation on Existing Water Courses

Economic

- Cost of Desalination
- Interbasin Transfer
- Panama Canal Modification and Shipping Trends
- Treatment Cost of Surface Water
- State Boundary Difference
- Military and Federal Owned Lands

11) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Members of the Council elected Ben Thompson as Chair and Tom Ratcliffe as Vice Chair.

12) Local Elected Official Comments

Senator Eric Johnson thanked the council members for serving earlier in the meeting.

Representative Cecily Hill thanked the council members for serving during this period of the agenda.

13) Public Comments

The following comments were heard from the public:

- Jim McLain - I am a water well driller from Chatham and represent the GA drillers association. I really sympathize with the goals you have set for three years. I encourage you to make use of whatever sources of info are available out there. Science advisors will be EPD. EPD gets most of their info from well drillers. We attempted to get members of our association on councils because nobody knows more about usage and quality. Nowhere in the state did we get representation. We are a valuable source of info to this type of group. If you want to know where water/usage problems are - talk to well drillers. Our association is available and we'd be glad to provide any info you need.

This public group here is water professionals. That's why we are here. Don't take this group lightly because there is an incredible amount of knowledge here. Take this public group out here as source of information and not as a pain. We can help you a lot.

- Don Garner - County Extension Agent for Glynn County. He is assigned to work with this group. If you have any questions or issue, or data needs to be taken from the university - I am here to augment this group if you need. If there's a gap in

data – if it's out there we'll endeavor to get it for you so that you can make fact based decisions. Thank you for your service to the state.

- Daniel Parshley – I'm really pleased to be here with the greatest minds of Coastal Georgia, with people that care deeply about the future of the coast. I am concerned over the structure the council has taken with five river basins, six councils, and four meetings right now. We attempted to address issues upstream of Coastal Georgia, but were mired in meetings and competing issues. I strongly suggest that you please consider management on a water basin basis if we look at water basins to the west and the northern direction. If we look at the underlying aquifer, it's spread out. If we have water basin councils and subcommittees handling them, the underlying aquifer may be most efficient way to handle it. We have good people who are worried about 2011 past the election and upcoming terms. They might be frustrated in attempts to unite councils, the time commitment may become unbearable, and people will lose their commitment without progress.

On behalf of the Conservancy, I'd also like to mention that the environmental concern is not represented on council.

Thank you. It was a pleasure to meet many of you in the room today.

14) Wrap-up and Next Meeting

The following comment was presented by a Council Member:

- I would like to reiterate the need to deal with other councils. I agree with the comments about upstream councils. With proper management, there is the opportunity to increase planning process to as was just described. We need to get to it now. If we're reactive, it's much more difficult to solve.

The Council agreed to hold next meeting in Richmond Hill on June 25th. Members are okay printing and bringing their own materials. Let them know what to print and bring. They want materials at least 7 days in advance. Post to public on website as appropriate. *CDM Response* - Some items can be posted, but others may need council member decisions before they can be posted.

15) Meeting Evaluations

The Planning Consultant distributed meeting evaluation forms and all members of Council filled one out. The Planning Consultant collected the forms. This marked the end of Council Meeting 1.

16) Attendance List

Coastal Georgia Regional Water Council

Council Member Name	Present (X)
Dennis G. Baxter	X
Fred G. Blicht	
Chris Blocker	X
Kay W. Cantrell	X
Frank E. Field	X
Rick Gardner	X
John F. Godbee	X
William K. Guthrie	X
Duane Harris	X
Bill Hatcher	X
Cecily Hill	X
Don Hogan	X
Eric Johnson	X
Michelle L. Liotta	X
Reginald S Loper	X
John D. McIver	X
Michael J. Melton	X
Randall Morris	X
Phil Odom	
Keith F. Post	X
Tom Ratcliffe	X
Tony Sammons	X
Mark V. Smith	X
Larry M. Stuber	X
James Thomas	
Benjamin Thompson	X
Bryan Thompson	X
Horace Waller	X
Marky Waters	
Roger A Weaver	X

Public Attendees	
James Austin (representing NRCS)	X
Deatre Denion (representing DCA)	X
Todd Faircloth (representing GA Farm Bureau)	X
Don Gardner (representing UGA Coop Extension)	X
Brent Hanson (representing SNF Holding Company/Riceboro)	X
Jim McClain (representing GA Drillers Association/McClain's Shallow Wells)	X
Rahn Milligan (representing GSWCC)	X
Jared Nemitz (representing The Ford Plantation Golf Course/Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association)	X
Gene Oliver (representing NRCS/CGRCHDC)	X
Daniel Parshley (representing Glynn Environmental Coalition)	X
Bryan Snow (representing Georgia Forestry Commission)	X
Bennett Weinstein (representing GA EPD)	X

cc: Jeff Larson, EPD
Brian Baker, EPD