

Upper Oconee Water Planning Council: Summary of Public Outreach and Coordination Activities

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DATE: May 4, 2011

This memorandum describes the public outreach and coordination activities associated with the development of the Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan. The Upper Oconee region includes 13 counties including Baldwin, Barrow, Clarke, Greene, Hancock, Jackson, Laurens, Morgan, Oconee, Putnam, Walton, Washington, and Wilkinson. Outreach efforts were made to contact representatives in each county within the planning region to ensure that adequate opportunity to provide input into the Regional Water Plan development process was available for interested stakeholders.

Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council

The Upper Oconee regional water planning council (WPC) is comprised of residents of the region, who were appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to prepare the Regional Water Plan. Appendix A lists the Upper Oconee Water WPC members and their County of origin.

Council Coordination and Procedures

On September 15, 2009, the Upper Oconee WPC formally adopted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs demonstrating a commitment to work toward the development of regional water and conservation plans called for in the Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan (HR 1022) and as declared in the Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Planning Act (O.C.G.A. §12-5-520). The purpose of the MOA is to establish procedures and processes to guide regional water management councils in the development of water management and conservation plans and to ensure coordination between councils and local governments. The MOA requires each Council to adopt a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) based on a statewide template.

Combined, the MOA and PIP for the Council defines the following:

- Rules for Meeting Conduct – Meetings must be open with a reasonable amount of time allowed for both oral and written stakeholder and public comment. A 24-hour notice is required before all Council meetings. The Upper Oconee WPC reviewed rules for conduct developed by GAEPD on May 8, 2009. The purpose of these rules is to guide Council Members, planning contractors, and stakeholders from the general public in discussions during Council meetings. These rules specify meeting roles, preferred methods for discussions, requirements for set meeting agendas and written summaries for each meeting, provisions for allowing public comment and meeting adjournment. The Upper Oconee WPC reviewed meeting rules and was charged with either accepting them as written by GAEPD or making suggested changes. The rules agreed upon by the Upper Oconee WPC are provided as Appendix B.
- Operating Procedures – The Upper Oconee WPC also reviewed recommended operating rules and procedures developed by GAEPD on May 8, 2009. These recommendations define membership, leadership, rules for meetings, and decision processes. The rules specify that a quorum is defined as a majority of the membership and consensus for the WPC is considered to be two-thirds majority vote. The WPC elects a Chair and Vice Chair on an annual basis. Additionally, the procedures define that communications to WPC may be via mail, email and telephone. A copy of the Operating Rule and Procedures reviewed and agreed upon by the Upper Oconee WPC is provided as Appendix C.
- Upper Oconee WPC website – To aid in coordination and outreach to WPC members as well as other interested stakeholders, a website for all meeting notices and materials is located at: <http://www.upperoconee.org>. Additional materials, including memorandums and public notices from GAEPD also are located on this site.

For more specific details, the MOA can be downloaded from the Upper Oconee website¹, and the PIP is included in this supplement as Appendix D.

Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan Meetings

Following the meeting procedures defined in the MOA and PIP, the Upper Oconee WPC participated in a series of meetings, including two Joint Council meetings coordinated by GAEPD.

Council and Joint Council Meetings

Table 1 summarizes the primary topics covered and actions taken at each of the Council meetings while detailed summaries of each meeting, including premeeting materials, agendas and presentations can be downloaded from the Upper Oconee website. On average, seventy-two percent of the Council was in attendance at the 10 meetings.

¹ http://www.upperoconee.org/pages/regional_water_planning/upper_oconee_council/index.php

TABLE 1
Summary of Upper Oconee WPC and Joint Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Decisions Made
Kick Off Meeting	March 13, 2009	Vision for Georgia's Water Resources Overview and Exercise about the regional planning process General schedule and logistics for planning process	Agreement to rotate meeting locations around the basin Methods of communication for Councils
Council Meeting 1	May 8, 2009	Overview and discussion of the water planning process Review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) Exercise on consensus decision making Exercise on operating rules and procedures Overview of the water planning region, facilities and resources Exercises on trends, forecast, factors, population, and workforce	Election of David Bennett and Chair and Richard McSpadden as co-chair
Council Meeting 2	June 12, 2009	Discussion regarding the MOA, operating procedures and meeting rules Review of and discussion about population and employment forecasts Introduction to modeling, resource assessments and agricultural water demands Overview of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Development and adoption of the vision statement	Postponed approving the final MOA until CM3 Development of a basin-specific website Adoption of the vision statement
Council Meeting 3	September 15, 2009	Discussion regarding the potential for joint meetings Milestones for the planning process Review of vision statement and development of draft goals Water use forecasts (population and employment, municipal and industrial, and agricultural) Overview of management	Approval of MOA Adoption of the PIP Appointment of an Executive Committee comprised of: Pat Graham, Roger Folsom and Richard Bentley Appointment of the Municipal and Industrial Subcommittee comprised of: Vince Ciampa, Rabun Neal, Alan Foster, Charlie

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Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Decisions Made
		practices	Armentrout
		Review and adoption of the PIP	
		Overview of resource assessments being prepared by GAEPD	
Council Meeting 4	November 18, 2010	Moment of silence to remember deceased Chair David Bennett	Appointment of Larry Eley and Jim Luke
		Field trip to Georgia Power's Plant Branch	Election of Richard Bentley as Chair and Dennis Holder as Vice Chair
		Update on agricultural water use forecasts	
		Revision of goals	
		Overview of municipal water and wastewater forecasts	
		Overview of energy and industrial water and wastewater forecasts	
		Review of outline for the WCDP	
		Overview of region-specific management practices and schedule for selecting management practices	
Joint Council Meeting 1	January 22, 2010	Resource assessments for surface water and groundwater availability and water quality	Next steps for Councils
		Next steps for resource assessments and Councils	
Council Meeting 5	March 24, 2010	Review of water demand forecasts (municipal, industrial, energy, and agricultural)	Selection of the management practice subcommittee comprise of: Larry Eley, Pat Hardy, Stuart Cofer, Charlie Armentrout, Alan Foster, Jennifer Davis, Benjie Tarbutton, Pat Graham, Hunter Bicknell, Vince Ciampa, Charles Jordan, and Kevin Little
		Review of surface water quantity and quality resource assessments and modeling techniques	
		Review of groundwater availability resource assessment	
		Review of potential management practices, approach for developing management practices, and	Decision of form basin management practice subcommittees for the upper, middle, and lower areas of the planning

TABLE 1
 Summary of Upper Oconee WPC and Joint Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Decisions Made
		the selection process	region
		Review of status and table of contents for the WCDP	
Council Meeting 6	June 16, 2010	Review of additional guidance provided by Director Barnes regarding flexibility in plan development	Selection of initial management practices for the WCDP
		Review of final water demand forecasts	
		Review of updated resource assessment modeling	
		Review of guidance for management practice selection and how practices should address current and anticipated gaps	
		Reports for management practice subcommittees	
		Initial management practice review and discussion	
		Review of next steps in developing the Regional Water Plan and planning schedule.	
Council Meeting 7	August 11, 2010	Overview of funding options from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority	Decision to add a goal related to water supply to the WPC goals
		Review of initial drafts of Sections 1 through 5 of the WCDP	Appointment of Management Practice Subcommittee comprised of: Charlie Armentrout, Pat Graham, Alan Foster, Larry Eley, Benjie Tarbutton, Jennifer Davis, Hunter Bicknell (Alternate), and Roger Folsom (Alternate)
		Review of WPC goals	
		Overview of approach for scoring and selecting management practices for inclusion on the WCDP	
		Weighting of evaluation criteria for management practices	
		Review of management practice tables for water supply, water quality, water demand, and wastewater	
		Discussion regarding council recommendations and other elements to include in the WCDP	

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Summary of Upper Oconee WPC and Joint Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Decisions Made
		Review of schedule for development of WCDP	
		Discussion regarding concerns over interbasin transfers	
Joint Council Meeting 2	October 6, 2010	Panel discussions on the following; 1) Water quality issues: nutrients and assimilative capacity, 2) agricultural water use and availability, 3) water supply needs through 2050, 4) coordination amongst councils, local governments, and neighboring states	
Council Meeting 8	October 13, 2010	Review of instream flow needs (subsistence flow) by GA DNR	Adoption of the scoring committee's management practice recommendations by Council.
		Review of updated results for resource assessment gaps	
		Discussion regarding management practices to address TMDLs	Approval to include a recommendation regarding the development of an instream flow policy in the WCDP.
		Review of the scoring for management practices	
		Review and discussion about regional plan enforcement and recommendations for the State	
		Discussion regarding implementation responsibilities outlined in Section 7 of the WCDP and of how implementation will be monitored and reported	
Council Meeting 9	December 8, 2010	Review final energy forecasts	Concurrence with benchmarks and monitoring approach for the UO WDCP.
		Discuss current draft of WDCP including changes to Draft Sections 1-5	
		Breakout group discussions of recommended management practices and corresponding implementation actions.	Agreed that a subcommittee approach be used to review & recommend potential 319 projects.
		Review of benchmarks and potential triggers for WDCP amendments	
		Discuss potential 319 grants for the Upper Oconee Region	
		CDs of Draft Supplemental	

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Summary of Upper Oconee WPC and Joint Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Decisions Made
		Documents distributed to Council members	
Council Meeting 10	March 9, 2011	<p>Review 319 Grant and "Council Future" recommendations.</p> <p>Feedback from local government and utility sessions.</p> <p>Discuss the Final Draft of the Regional Water Plan (RWP), also known as the Water Development and Conservation Plan.</p>	<p>Council agreed that the Chair and planning contractors start discussions with the RCs on how the groups can work together on implementation of the RWP.</p> <p>A motion was made and passed to recommend that, after the current Council appointments expire in 2017, at least 6-9 of the original group be reappointed immediately to provide continuity for the RWP update.</p> <p>Another motion was made and passed to recommend to the state that it participate in funding the RCs specifically for implementation of the RWP.</p> <p>The council voted to approve the draft RWP for submittal to EPD & release for public comment (after the changes noted during CM10 are addressed).</p>

Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees were formed to obtain information required for completing assessments and forecasts, for obtaining local knowledge within subareas of the planning region, and for additional Council member input in the identification, weighting, scoring, and final selection of management practices.

The Municipal and Industrial Subcommittee is comprised of representatives from permitted utilities and industries, and the subcommittee's focus is gathering data related to current and anticipated water withdrawals and discharges. Three subcommittees were formed to focus on geographical subareas within the planning region. The geographical subcommittees are the Upper Oconee Subcommittee, Middle Oconee Subcommittee, and Lower Oconee Subcommittee. The purpose of these subcommittees is to provide localized input on forecasts, resource assessments, management practice identification, and

management practice selection. By obtaining localized input, some selected management practices can be targeted to more specific areas where they are most likely to be implementable and effective. The Management Practice Scoring Subcommittee is responsible for providing input on potential management practices, the weighting of potential management practices, and the management practice scoring and selection process. A summary of subcommittee and ad hoc committee meetings and conference calls is provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Summary of Upper Oconee WPC Subcommittee and Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Information Obtained/Decisions Made
Municipal and Industrial Water Use Forecasting	December 14, 2009	Appointments with local providers	Data about local use to refine water use figures being used for forecasts
Municipal and Industrial Water Use Forecasting (Conference Call)	March 11, 2010	Draft forecasts and per capita rates	Additional input about local usage figures
Municipal and Industrial Water Use Forecasting (Conference Call)	March 17, 2010	Draft M&I forecasts	Feedback on draft forecasts prior to CM 5
Upper Area Subcommittee Meeting	May 25, 2010	Existing water demands Key water resource issues in the subbasin area Potential management practices Next steps in the planning process	Make sure that information discussed during the calls is considered in the final forecasts and in developing management practices
Central Area Subcommittee Meeting	May 25, 2010	Existing water demands Key water resource issues in the subbasin area Potential management practices Next steps in the planning process	Make sure that information discussed during the calls is considered in the final forecasts and in developing management practices
Lower Area Subcommittee Meeting	May 25, 2010	Existing water demands Key water resource issues in the subbasin area Potential management practices Next steps in the planning process	Make sure that information discussed during the calls is considered in the final forecasts and in developing management practices
Upper Area	June 2, 2010	Review of water quantity	Use information obtained

TABLE 2
Summary of Upper Oconee WPC Subcommittee and Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

Meeting Type	Meeting Date	Topics Discussed	Information Obtained/Decisions Made
Subcommittee Meeting (Conference Call)		and quality resource assessments, gaps identified and shortfalls in assessments (as far as data needs) as identified by council members	during call to refine assessments
Central Area Subcommittee Meeting (Conference Call)	June 2, 2010	Review of water quantity and quality resource assessments, gaps identified and shortfalls in assessments (as far as data needs) as identified by council members	Use information obtained during call to refine assessments
Lower Area Subcommittee Meeting (Conference Call)	June 2, 2010	Review of water quantity and quality resource assessments, gaps identified and shortfalls in assessments (as far as data needs) as identified by council members	Use information obtained during call to refine assessments
Management Practice Scoring Workshop	August 24, 2010	Review of management practices identified by the full WPC	Selected and prioritized management practices for inclusion in the WCDP
Management Practice Scoring Conference Call	September 8, 2010	Review of scoring criteria and consideration of re-scoring General presentation format for management practice scoring results	Re-scored some management practices based on clarification regarding criteria Agreed upon presentation format

Other Outreach Activities

Local Government and Utility Coordination

A process was developed and followed to ensure that representatives from all local governments and public utilities within the Upper Oconee WPC planning region have the opportunity to provide information and participate in the planning process.

An initial search was performed to locate readily available information from GAEPD or on the Internet. This includes existing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and TMDL Implementation Plans and plans prepared by regional planning councils, water management districts, and academic institutions. A number of stakeholders, who may have interest in the planning process, were identified through the initial search.

A list of all water withdrawal and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits was obtained from GAEPD and attempts to contact representatives from all identified permitted entities were initially made via telephone and email. Permittees

were asked to provide information regarding current water usage, planned capital improvement projects, and anticipated water needs that are not yet included in planning documents.

Follow up requests for information (RFIs) were mailed to each identified permittee. In addition, a letter was sent to each Council member asking for input on contacts at local governments and industries that use and discharge water or that have plans detailing future capital improvements and/or that contain current and planned management practices. In addition to the list of permittees and contacts provided by Council Members, contacts for all county and incorporated municipalities were identified. An RFI was mailed to each entity on the contact list. An FTP site was developed to aid respondents in providing information for use in the planning process. For RFIs returned due to incorrect addresses, new contacts were located and RFIs were resent via mail or email. Telephone calls were made to permittees and contacts identified as being significant water users or having known capital improvement or management plans who did not respond to the initial RFI.

Local governments and utilities were again contacted to attend three local government meetings held February 8 and 10, 2011 in Athens, Milledgeville, and Dublin. The agenda for each meeting included an overview of the Regional Planning Process, the draft RWP, the recommended MPs, implementation responsibilities, as well as a question/comment period. The meetings were well attended and provided good feedback from local entities.

Public Outreach

Although the Upper Oconee WPC allows public participation and questions during meetings, time is also reserved at the end of each Council Meeting for comments from elected officials and the general public. During these sessions, comments from elected officials and stakeholders were captured in the official meeting minutes.

In addition to the public comment period at the end of meetings, written comments are solicited and included in the meeting summaries available on the website:

http://www.upperoconee.org/pages/regional_water_planning/upper_oconee_council/meetings.php.

The following topics were the focus of written comments received at the council meetings:

1. Identification and specific roles of the planning consultants,
2. Potential impact of the management of basinwide water resources on local water rate structures,
3. Incompleteness of agricultural water forecasts,
4. The need for emphasis on water efficiency and conservation in both public and private sectors,
5. The need for fees on withdrawals and discharges,
6. Variations on per capita use between counties based on the customer base
7. Using multiple years of data will provide better information for annual average withdrawals for municipalities,

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8. Nodes involving off-stream pump-storage reservoirs should be considered in the resource assessment for surface water quantity,
 9. Downstream needs should be considered in the surface water quantity resource assessment and not just whether needs are met in a specific area (node),
 10. The Council should look at water efficiency in infrastructure and plumbing across all sectors,
 11. Conservation price structures must be non-punitive in nature,
 12. There is no incentive to conserve if irrigation is automatically billed at higher rates,
 13. Charging more for irrigation implies that the use is bad and should be punished, and this is unwarranted,
 14. Encouraging efficient use is not synonymous with reducing overall irrigation use,
 15. Need to move away from negative perceptions associated with xeriscaping.
 16. Automatic higher rates do not encourage efficient use, it encourages no irrigation use.

Additional public comment was obtained through communications directly to Council members and the planning contractor. For example, emails related to concerns about the water usage and population forecasts data were emailed to the planning contractor and numbers were reviewed and refined based on feedback from stakeholders. All input from stakeholders was considered in the development of the final plan.

Appendix A: Upper Oconee Water Planning Council Members

(As of December 6, 2010)

Name	City	County
James Andrews	Sandersville	Washington
Charles S. Armentrout	Athens	Clarke
Richard Bentley, Chairman	Milledgeville	Baldwin
Hunter Bicknell	Jefferson	Jackson
Vincent Ciampa	Eatonton	Putnam
Stuart A. Cofer (Alternate)	Watkinsville	Oconee
Melvin Davis	Watkinsville	Oconee
Jennifer Davis	Dublin	Laurens
Larry J. Eley	White Plains	Green
Roger L. Folsom	Dublin	Laurens
Alan Foster	Eatonton	Putnam
Linda S. Gantt	Watkinsville	Oconee
Pat Graham	Braselton	Barrow
Patrick H. Hardy, Sr.	Madison	Morgan
Dana M. Heil	Athens	Clarke
Allen M. Hodges	Sandersville	Washington
Danny Hogan	Dexter	Laurens
Dennis W. Holder, Vice Chair	Irwinton	Wilkinson
Charles H. Jordan	Sandersville	Washington
Kevin Little	Monroe	Walton
Jim Luke (Alternate)	Bogart	Clarke
Drew Marczak	Athens	Clarke
Richard McSpadden	Bogart	Oconee
W. Rabun Neal	Greensboro	Greene
Bill Ross	Statham	Barrow
Benjamin R. Tarbutton	Sandersville	Washington
Greg Thompson	Monroe	Walton
Representative Terry England, Ex-Officio		
Senator Bill Cowser, Ex-Officio		

Appendix B: Rules for Meetings

Rules for Meetings – Upper Oconee Water Planning Council

Rule 1: Purpose of rules

A. These rules of conduct specify expectations and meeting processes to guide Water Planning Councils and their members in development of recommended Water Development and Conservation plans. The rules are subordinate to (1) regional water planning guidance provided by EPD, (2) the MOA between the Upper Oconee Council, EPD, and DCA, and (3) the Operating Procedures adopted by the Upper Oconee Council.

Rule 2: Meeting Roles

A. The Chair of the Council will preside at Council meetings. The Chair's responsibilities include working with the Regional Planning Contractor to prepare draft agenda, facilitate Council deliberations, and ensure productive discussion at Council meetings. The Chair will also work with the Regional Planning Contractor to guide the Council through consensus decision-making and voting processes. The Chair may attend other public meetings with the Georgia EPD representative and speak on behalf of the Council.

B. The Vice-Chair of the Council will perform the Chair's duties in that person's absence and will be responsible for reviewing and keeping copies of meeting summaries and decisions recorded by the Regional Planning Contractor.

C. Council members will actively participate in Council deliberations, following guidelines for communications listed below. Any member can offer verbal or written proposals for the group's consideration. Members are responsible for communicating their opinions on proposals under discussion and offering revisions to make proposals more acceptable.

D. Regional Planning Contractors will support the Council in development of the Regional Water Plan. Contractors will provide technical resources and neutral facilitators to work with the Chair and assist Council members in finding mutually acceptable solutions. As specified in consultation with the Council Chair, planning contractors may facilitate Council meetings, guide consensus decision-making and/or voting processes, and work with members during and outside of meetings to resolve differences. Contractors will also serve as recorders during the meeting and produce meeting summaries for review and approval by the Council.

E. EPD Representative. Each Council will have a designated representative from EPD who will attend Council meetings as an information resource. The EPD representative will be available to answer questions about the planning process and provide feedback on Council progress to date, as requested. The representative is also available to talk with members of the media. Finally, the representative can access other resources within EPD to answer technical questions that may arise during Council deliberations.

Rule 3: Communications

A. In order to have open and productive discussions, Council members agree to the following rules and will follow them in Council meetings and other communications regarding Council business:

1. One person will speak at a time. Members will refrain from interrupting each other and from side conversations that distract others from listening to the person speaking.
2. Each person will speak for themselves rather than attempting to speak for others at the table.
3. Members will strive to listen, be open-minded and maintain a sense of humor.
4. Each person will make every effort to stay on track with the agenda and avoid grandstanding or digressions.
5. Members will seek a better understanding of different interests and perspectives and try to find common ground.
6. Members will refrain from personal attacks, statements blaming others for specific actions or outcomes, and aggressive verbal or nonverbal behavior or sarcasm.
7. Members will seek to resolve differences and disputes within the Council's planning process, with assistance from the Regional Planning Contractor, rather than attempting to use external channels to influence Council deliberations.

Rule 4: Meeting agenda and summaries

A. The Council Chair will work with the Regional Planning Contractor to prepare a draft agenda. Each agenda will state the meeting's purpose and include a checklist of intended results. Meeting agenda will focus on the elements of Regional Water Plan development specified in the regional planning guidance.

B. Agenda will include the beginning and tentative end times for the meeting, discussion topics and action items, estimated time limits in minutes for each topic, and the name of the person leading each topic.

C. The agenda and any supporting or background material will be distributed in advance of each meeting (electronically or by regular mail) and posted on the EPD website. Materials will be delivered in sufficient time for review prior to each meeting.

D. Members will be given a chance to read and modify the agenda at the beginning of each meeting. Before proceeding, the group will reach agreement on the agenda, including meeting purpose, intended results, and anticipated decision points.

E. The Planning Contractor will produce written summaries of each meeting, documenting all decisions and highlights of the discussion that led to those decisions. Summaries will be distributed to Council members for review before the next meeting.

F. The summary of the previous meeting shall be subject to approval at each meeting. The summary and any action items that do not require individual consideration may be placed on the agenda at the beginning in a "consent agenda" section. This information will be provided ahead of time or before the start of the meeting.

G. Consent agenda items will not be discussed individually unless any member requests that they be removed from this section and placed on the regular agenda as a separate item for discussion.

Rule 5: Discussion of issues

A. Any item that is on the agenda as approved at the beginning of the meeting may be discussed. A motion or a second is not required. The Chair or Planning Contractor will introduce the item or topic and, when appropriate, lead the Council in open discussion to identify potential actions or solutions.

B. To assist in developing Regional Water Plan content, planning contractors will produce background information and may propose alternatives for Council review and consideration.

C. Any Council members may make verbal or written proposals to the Council. Written proposals should state the problem or concern to be addressed and then state the proposed solution.

D. Whenever possible, written proposals should be provided to the Chair and Planning Contractor so they can be distributed for review prior to each meeting.

E. All members will be given an opportunity to speak or ask questions. Any member can suggest changes to a proposal, and the proposal can be modified with group agreement.

F. The Chair or the Planning Contractor's facilitator will ensure that pros and cons are discussed and that all points of view are encouraged.

Rule 6: Decision making

A. After a proposal has been presented, the Chair or the Planning Contractor will lead the Council through open discussion of pros and cons. All members will be given an opportunity to speak at least once on each proposal.

B. After thorough discussion, the Chair or Planning Contractor will re-state the proposal with any modifications made as a result of the discussion. The Chair or Planning Contractor will then test for consensus: *"Who can't live with this agreement or course of action as modified to meet the all of the interests expressed so far?"*

C. The Chair or Planning Contractor may ask members to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement.

D. Members who do not agree with a proposal will be asked to offer modifications that are acceptable to them and include the elements that other members have said are necessary for their concurrence: *"What improvements can you suggest that will make it more acceptable to you while continuing to meet the interests of everyone else with a stake in the issue?"*

E. The Chair or Planning Contractor may also offer modifications to meet outstanding interests.

F. Following further discussion, the Chair or Planning Contractor will again test for consensus. If consensus has not been reached after a reasonable discussion period, the Chair or the Planning Contractor may recommend tabling the item to allow the Planning Contractor to work with individual members or a subcommittee to develop an alternate proposal that addresses their concerns.

G. The Chair may, after a reasonable discussion period and effort to address outstanding concerns, call for a vote on the proposal. A simple majority (50 percent plus one of the members present) can over-rule the Chair's call for a vote.

H. If the Chair's call for a vote is over-ruled, the Chair may appoint a sub-committee to revise the proposal or develop an alternate proposal that meets the outstanding concerns.

I. When voting on a proposal, approval by a two-thirds majority is required for its acceptance. Votes may be by show of hands or written ballot. Any member may request a written ballot.

J. If the vote produces a stalemate (defined as between a simple majority and two-third majority vote) the vote will be held to the next regular council meeting. If a two-third majority vote is not achieved at the next council meeting, the vote will pass with a simple majority vote.

K. All decisions made by consensus and by voting will be recorded in the summary of each meeting.

L. Minority opinions may be documented in the meeting summary with concurrence from those dissenting votes, without the names of the dissenting members disclosed. Minority opinions may be submitted by the Council members for inclusion in the meeting summary.

Rule 7: Public notice and comment

A. The Regional Planning Contractor will advertise Council meetings as specified in the Public Involvement Plan adopted by the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council.

B. A period for public comment will be provided at each regular Council meeting and will be included in meeting agenda. Written comments will also be accepted at each regular Council meeting. The Council may adopt time limits or other guidelines for public comment as needed.

Rule 8: Ending the meeting

A. There will be time on the agenda at the end of the meeting for the Chair or Planning Contractor to summarize the progress made at the meeting in relation to development of the draft Regional Water Plan. The summary will include any follow-up action steps agreed to by the group, clarifying the tasks, responsible parties and time limits.

C. Council members may suggest improvements for future meetings. The Chair or Regional Planning Contractor will implement feasible ideas at the next meeting.

D. Standard procedure will be for the Chair to close the meeting when the agenda is complete or the scheduled ending time is reached. Meetings will only be extended if there is a need that cannot be met through other means (e.g., subcommittee work between meetings) and if there is substantial agreement among the members present to do so.

Appendix C: Operating Rules and Procedures

UPPER OCONEE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES

I. NAME AND PURPOSE

The name of this organization shall be the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council.

The purpose of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council is to prepare a recommended regional Water Development and Conservation Plan that promotes the sustainable use of the water resources of the planning region, through the selection of an array of management practices, that will support the region's and state's economy, protect public health and natural systems, and enhance the quality of life for all citizens. The Water Development and Conservation Plan will identify management practices that will be used to ensure that forecasted water resource needs are met.

II. DEFINITIONS

Advisory body of local elected officials – Group composed of one representative from each county and city in the water planning region, to provide recommendations and input on regional population, economic and employment forecasts and on other data and information required for preparation of the water development and conservation plan.

Chair – The individual responsible for presiding at council meetings.

Consensus – Cooperative development of mutually acceptable decisions. Consensus decision is understood to mean that the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council members have had an opportunity to express their views, understand the decision and, given the efforts made to address different interests, are willing to live with the specified course of action.

Council members – Individuals who have been appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker to serve on the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council through the process specified in the Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan.

EPD – Environmental Protection Division.

Operating Procedures – The procedures by which the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council will handle their activities.

Quorum – The minimum number of Council members required to be present at a meeting before any business can be transacted. In the case of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council, 50 percent plus one of the filled appointee positions shall constitute a quorum.

Regional Planning Contractor – EPD provided Contractor who will assist and support the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council with planning, organizing, preparing, and writing a water development and conservation plan.

Rules for Meetings – The rules guiding Council members during Council meetings and deliberations.

Two-thirds majority vote – Sixty-seven percent or more of the Council members present at a meeting.

Vice-Chair – Individual selected by the Council that in the absence of the Chair performs the duties of the Chair.

Water Council Leadership – Chair and Vice-Chair

Water Planning Regions – Those regions established by the Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan.

III. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Council Members. Individuals that represent interests such as agriculture, forestry, industry, commerce, local governments, water utilities, regional development centers, tourism, recreation and the environment. The Governor appointed thirteen members plus one alternate; the Lieutenant Governor appointed six members plus one alternate and the Speaker of the House appointed six members plus one alternate. The Lieutenant Governor and Speaker also each appointed a non-voting ex officio member from among the membership of the Senate and House.

Term of Office. Members shall have a three-year term with re-appointment at the pleasure of the initial appointing authority. Ex-officio members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker shall serve two-year terms. In the event of a vacancy, the official who made the initial appointment shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the applicable term.

IV. COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

General Powers. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council Leadership shall function within existing State laws and regulations and shall follow guidance provided by EPD.

Number and Qualifications. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall have one Chair and one Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be selected by a two-thirds majority vote and shall serve a six-month term, with no term limits.

The Chair of the Council. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall select a Chair. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council. The Chair shall work with the Regional Planning Contractor to ensure that all meeting notices are provided in a timely manner. The Chair shall also work with the Regional Planning Contractor to identify the purpose and necessary outcomes for each meeting and ensure that those outcomes are achieved. The Chair shall convey requests of the Council to EPD and DCA.

The Vice-Chair of the Council. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall select one Vice-Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall be responsible for reviewing and keeping written

copies of meeting summaries and decisions recorded by the Regional Planning Contractor. The Vice-Chair may convey requests of the Council to EPD and DCA.

Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair. The initial Chair and Vice-Chair shall be selected by a simple majority vote of the members present at the first regular meeting of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council. At the end of the first six-month term and every six months thereafter, the Council shall select a Chair and Vice-Chair by two-thirds majority vote. The Chair and Vice-Chair may serve more than one term.

V. DECISION MAKING

Decision-Making. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall attempt to reach consensus in its decision making, as described in its Rules for Meetings. In the event consensus on a decision cannot be reached in a reasonable time period, the Council may make decisions by a two-thirds majority vote. The Chair, after a reasonable discussion period, may initiate a vote on a decision, unless over-ruled by a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of the members present at the meeting. After one stalemate vote (defined as a vote between a simple majority and a two-thirds majority vote), the vote will carry over to the next regular council meeting. At the next regular council meeting if a two-thirds majority vote is still not achieved, the vote will be decided by a simple majority. There must be quorum as defined in these procedures when voting.

Participation in decision making. All members of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council who are present at a meeting may participate in discussion and efforts to reach consensus. For purposes of voting on Council decisions, each member shall have one vote. Alternate members will be eligible to vote if counted to constitute a quorum. If any alternate members are counted to constitute a quorum, all alternates present at the meeting shall be eligible to vote. Ex-officio members are non-voting members of the Council. Any member can send a designee to a meeting for information purposes only, but that designee will not participate in Council deliberations or voting.

Non-Represented Interests. Government agencies, individuals, local governments, and other organizations not directly represented by a water planning council member are encouraged to participate during designated public comment periods during Council meetings; however, non-represented interests will not act as voting members of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council.

VI. MEETINGS AND GOVERNANCE

Regular Meetings. A regular meeting of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall be held once per quarter in 2009, 2010, and 2011 (time period might be shortened if the Water Development and Conservation Plan is completed and adopted by the Director prior to June 2011). The notice of the meeting must be posted on the Council website and local newspaper(s) and distributed in such a manner so as to allow for public participation. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council is encouraged to schedule its regular meetings on days and times that allow for full and diverse participation.

Other Meetings. Joint meetings with other water planning councils and additional meetings of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council will be held as determined by the Council or EPD. The notice of these meeting must be posted and distributed in such a manner so as to allow for public participation.

Open Meetings. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall conduct open meetings. The Council shall give at least 24-hour notice of any meeting and post the announcement in a public place(s). A meeting agenda or summary of topics shall be published with the notice. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council is intended to be a public endeavor, with input from all who want to contribute.

Meeting Summaries. The Regional Planning Contractor working with the Council shall keep accurate meeting summaries of all Upper Oconee Water Planning Council meetings. All meeting summaries shall be subject to approval at the subsequent Upper Oconee Water Planning Council meeting. The meeting summaries shall be made available to the public within two weeks of the meeting.

Quorum. A majority of the total membership of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall be present before specifying consensus agreement or voting on any major decisions at each meeting. If a quorum is not present (see definition in Section II), a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting without further notice.

Subcommittees. The Upper Oconee Water Planning Council shall have the ability to establish subcommittees made up of Council members to facilitate dialogue and resolution of issues and conflicts within the water planning region, with adjacent water planning regions, or with water planning regions that rely upon shared resources.

Presumption of Assent. A member of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council who is present at a meeting at which action on any matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action unless the dissent of such Member is recorded by being entered in the summary of the meeting.

Resignation of Chair, Vice-Chair and Members. Any Chair, Vice-Chair or Member may resign at any time by submitting a resignation in writing to the Director of EPD, who will notify the appointing officials. Such resignation takes effect from the time of its receipt by State officials unless a date or time is fixed in the resignation, in which case it will take effect from that time. Acceptance of the resignation shall not be required to make it effective.

Attendance at Meetings. Members of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council are expected to attend and participate in the regular meetings. Any member missing three consecutive meetings or four meetings in two years will be asked by the Chair to resign from the Council, according to the resignation procedures.

Participation by Non-Members. Public participation in the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council process is encouraged by expressing views and opinions to the council Members. The Chair may adopt special rules of discussion consistent with the Public Involvement Plan on a case-by-case basis, however a reasonable amount of time must be provided to solicit and collect public comments during each meeting.

Rules for Meetings.

After EPD review and comment, the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council will, by consensus or a two-thirds majority vote, adopt Rules of Meeting based on a template provided by EPD. Once adopted, the Rules for Meetings shall be the regular meeting method of the Council and any subcommittees it establishes.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

These operating procedures and the Council's Rules for Meetings shall be reviewed annually. After EPD review and comment, the procedures may be altered, amended, or replaced by new operating procedures by consensus or by a two-thirds majority vote of the Upper Oconee Water Planning Council members. All Members shall have received written notice of any and all proposed changes to the operating procedures at least two weeks prior to the date such changes are to be acted upon.

Approved:

_____/_____/2009

Appendix D: Public Involvement Plan

Public Involvement Plan Outline

Regional water planning councils will adopt a Public Involvement Plan based on the following template. The template establishes the basic public involvement activities to be undertaken by all regional water planning councils. It also provides for additional elements to be adopted at the discretion of individual water planning councils.

The Chair of the regional water planning council will use discretion in permitting additional public comment or adjusting to adapt to specific meeting timelines and constraints, so long as the intent and expectations described below are followed.

The regional water planning councils with assistance from regional water planning contractors should complete the following form, including specifying additional elements that may be identified by each council.

The regional water planning councils, assisted by their regional planning contractors, will follow the adopted Public Involvement Plan to provide opportunities for meaningful input from key stakeholders, the members of local government advisory body, and the general public.

Guiding principles

The Upper Oconee regional water planning council recognizes the benefit and importance of providing opportunities for diverse input throughout the regional water planning process. The principles of the public input process are:

- Stakeholders and regional water planning council members will treat each other with respect and dignity;
- All participants will have an open mind and participate openly and honestly;
- The regional water planning process will continue with concurrent public comment throughout;
- Georgia GAEPD will provide public notice and take public comment on draft regional water plans after they are submitted;
- Stakeholder comments will be pertinent to the topic of the meeting at which they are expressed; and
- Input from the public, key stakeholders, and the members of the Local Government Advisory Body will be considered and incorporated in regional water planning council work products.

Regional water planning councils may add expectations to this list as deemed necessary.

- Meeting materials will be posted to the Upper Oconee water planning region website

Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders for the Upper Oconee water planning region are identified below. All members of the public will have opportunities for input, even if not specifically identified in this section.

- Local Government Advisory Body – includes one representative from each city and county within the water planning region
- Neighboring regional water planning councils – water planning councils that share borders and/or water resources
- Regional Commissions – agencies supporting local and regional comprehensive planning
- Agriculture – includes water permit holders for agricultural applications
- Businesses – includes local businesses (this audience may be sub-divided into more specific categories)
- Industries – includes industrial water permit holders and municipally-supplied industrial facilities
- Forestry – includes owners of managed forest lands and the forest products industry
- Institutions/educational/schools – includes public and private schools as well as institutions
- Tourism – includes public and private organizations related to local travel and tourism
- Recreation – includes citizens and industry related to recreational water uses
- Environment – includes citizens, agencies, and groups focused on environmental protection
- Public – any citizen interested in the regional water planning process

Regional water planning councils may add key stakeholders to this list as deemed necessary. Other stakeholders:

- Local media throughout the council area – emphasis will be on educating media about the website. [Input on local media needed from individual council members]

Procedural criteria

Time will be provided at every regional water planning council meeting for input from stakeholders and the public. The procedural criteria are intended to ensure the public respects the regional water planning council's schedule constraints and the regional water planning council respects the public's opportunity to present relevant and different opinions. To facilitate a fair and efficient process, the Upper Oconee water planning council has adopted the following procedures for public comment.

- All regional water planning council meetings will be open meetings
- Stakeholders will be provided an opportunity to provide comments pertinent to the topic of the meeting in which they are expressed
- Time will be provided during the Upper Oconee regional water planning council meetings for public comment at the conclusion of major agenda items. The Chair, with assistance from the planning contractors, will manage the flow of public comment, which will be taken in the following order:
 - Council members
 - Elected Officials
 - Public
- Written comments are preferred, even if elected officials or members of the public choose to verbally address the Council to ensure appropriate documentation of comments as the individual intended. Written comments will be incorporated into meeting summaries.
- Provisions for written comments will be made at all regional water planning council meetings
- The Chair of the regional water planning council will set appropriate time limits to ensure progress of the meeting while respecting those who wish to address the council through the public comment period. Regional water planning councils may add to this list as deemed necessary.
- The Upper Oconee regional water planning council will establish a subcommittee to help provide written responses to comments/questions/concerns requiring feedback. To ensure that all interested parties receive the same information, the responses will be aggregated into categories that state the Council's position. This information will be posted to the council website as an addendum to the meeting summary.

Meeting announcements

All regional water planning council meetings will be open meetings, including at least a 24-hour notice of any meetings. The following provisions will be made for all planning council meetings to inform the public of upcoming meetings.

-
- Posted on the Upper Oconee regional water planning council website with a meeting agenda or summary of topics to be covered, meeting time, and meeting address. The location, date, and time of the meeting will be posted at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. A meeting agenda or list of topics will be posted at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.
 - Posted at the meeting location with a meeting agenda or summary of topics to be covered, meeting time, and meeting address
 - Meeting summaries will be posted on the Upper Oconee regional water planning council website
 - Meeting materials will be posted to the website as well

Regional water planning councils may add to this list as deemed necessary. Other provisions: Local media will also be notified through website.

Stakeholder and public comment opportunities

Specific opportunities during the regional water planning process for stakeholder and public input include but are not limited to the following.

- Meetings of the Upper Oconee regional water planning council
- Upper Oconee regional water planning council website (documents will be posted periodically with timeframes for comment and mechanisms for comment clearly stated)
- Letters may be mailed to Georgia GAEPD
- Emails to the regional water planning council and/or Georgia GAEPD
- Georgia GAEPD public notice period for the resource assessments
- Georgia GAEPD public notice period on the draft regional water plans

Regional water planning councils may use their discretion to permit additional stakeholder and public comment opportunities, as deemed appropriate. Other provisions:

- Town Hall style meetings held throughout planning regions to explain process and provide additional public comment opportunities.
 - Meetings will be led by Council member(s) from the area
 - Meetings to be held in the north, middle, and south part of the region
 - Goal to hold town halls twice a year (every 6 months) beginning in early 2010

Local government officials

Much of the implementation of the regional water plans is the responsibility of local governments; therefore input will be sought from the local government officials on the following specific topics.

- Regional population, economic and employment forecasts
- Fiscal implications of water management practices
- Draft regional water plan

The regional water planning council and local government officials should identify proper communication pathways. The following actions are intended to coordinate activities of the local government officials with the regional water planning councils.

- Local government officials will be provided an opportunity at the (beginning, during, end) of the regional water planning council meetings to comment on the regional water planning process and items on the meeting agenda
- Local government officials may provide written comments to the regional water planning council, as needed.

Regional water planning councils may add to this list as deemed necessary. Other provisions:

- Council leadership will specifically reach out to local political and community leaders (elected officials, Chamber of Commerce representatives, etc.) working in the area of the meeting location to encourage their attendance and input at the meeting

Other regional water planning councils

In order to plan and coordinate the use and protection of shared water resources, the regional water planning council will coordinate with adjacent and hydrologically-connected councils throughout the regional water planning process. Georgia GAEPD will convene some meetings to discuss shared water resources, such as on the current resource assessments. The regional water planning councils will use the following communication pathways to coordinate with adjacent regional water planning councils.

- Members of the regional water planning council will attend shared resource meetings and other joint meetings
- At the discretion of the Chair, an opportunity may be provided at regional water planning council meetings for announcements or progress reports from adjacent regional water planning councils

The Chair of the regional water planning councils may use their discretion to provide additional coordination with adjacent regional water planning councils, as deemed appropriate.

Regional water planning councils may add to this list as deemed necessary. Other provisions:

- Meetings/Conference Calls/Communications on relevant topics between any subcommittees formed by the Upper Oconee Council and adjacent Councils' subcommittees as deemed necessary by the Councils.

Review and consideration of public input

The objective of this process is to gather relevant and diverse input to improve the quality of the recommended regional water plans. Once public comments are received from the public and key stakeholders the regional water planning council with the assistance of the regional planning contractor will consider and address these comments. Written comments and web comments will be summarized and provided to the regional water planning council members. Verbal comments will be summarized and included in meeting summaries.

Regional Outreach Activities

The Upper Oconee regional water planning council leadership encourages its members to engage local communities by pursuing speaking opportunities with civic and community groups to explain the water planning process and the role of the council in it.

Council will develop a general overview presentation that can feature information specific to a community within the planning region.

Specific messages and/or talking points may be developed for certain topics as needed by the Council, with input/review by planning contractors.