

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354
Linda MacGregor, P. E., Branch Chief 404/675-6232
FAX: 404/675-6247

March 27, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Doug Baughman, CH2MHILL

SUBJECT: Kick-Off Meeting Summary
Upper Oconee Water Planning Council Meeting

CC: Kevin Farrell, GA EPD
David Ashley, JJG
Marci Davis, JJG
Diana Jackson, JJG
Tai-Yi Su, JJG

Georgia Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan Regional Water Planning

Kick-Off Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: March 13, 2009
Location: Georgia Aquarium

1) Council Member Introduction

Each council member introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background.

2) Agency Member Introduction

Kevin Farrell, EPD Assistant Branch Chief for the Oconee/Ocmulgee/Altamaha River Basins, was introduced and spoke briefly to the Council. The consultants for the Council were introduced and included Doug Baughman (Council Coordinator) and Marci Davis (Council Facilitator). Diana Jackson (Assistant Council Coordinator) was unable to attend the meeting, and Tai-Yi Su (Technical Consultant) was introduced as filling in for Diana, Joe Krewer, program coordinator for DCA for Upper Oconee and Middle Chattahoochee Councils, was introduced. Joe will follow up and monitor the

program through the life of this project. Several members from the Georgia Soil and Water conservation Commission were also present to observe the meeting.

3) Water Planning “35” Exercise

The following question was posed to the Council - *“What is the most important thing we need to keep in mind as a group in the Regional Water Planning Process?”* Each person was asked to write down their answer on an index card. After each person developed an answer, the members were asked to discuss their answers with five other council members, individually. During each discussion, the two council members were to divide seven points between themselves based on negotiation of the merits of each answer, and record the number of points they received. At the end of the exercise, the total number of points for each council member was summed and the ten highest scores were identified. The top ten answers for the Upper Oconee Council are as follows, just as they were written:

1. We are all dependent on the same water resources; our actions, uses and conservation of the resources affect all of us.
2. Our main concern should be not what’s good for our Upper Oconee Region, but what is good for ALL of Georgia..
3. To respect the view points of other council members and work to understand their community and businesses concerns relative to water.
4. Be committed to all-day meeting for the next three years; water quality
5. We need to listen well and develop our ideas as a group.
6. Water is a limited resource and protecting it is important to future generations.
7. Educate our region that each of us is dependent on the success of a water plan – water is our common denominator. We all depend on each other.
8. The most important thing is to learn our strengths and weakness throughout this process to accomplish the best results for everyone.
9. Try to be considerate of all the water concerns and interests that are represented; keep in mind that there can be many different views and opinions.
10. Conservation and distribution.

Marci noted that many responses were similar. Some other responses with high scores include:

- Focus on water use planning that is equitable.
- Spirit of cooperation will be necessary if we are to assume positive results.
- Need to find the mission and focus on the result once we set the mission.
- We represent the water needs for ALL the people in our region and the decisions should

be for the good of the majority of the people of the region, not a few.

- Water quality and impoundment of water.

4) Council Notebook Walk-Through

The various sections of the Council Notebook were discussed with a brief overview of most sections provided. The April and May calendars were removed from the notebooks and the council members were asked to write their names on any dates that they would not be able to meet as well as potential meeting locations. The calendars were collected and the council members were told that they would be contacted regarding the next meeting date that best fits for the majority of the members.

5) General Logistics Questions, Project Questions and Discussion

Meeting schedule – Marci Davis mentioned this kick-off meeting is not one of the quarterly meetings. There will be at least four (4) meetings this year. Council members can decide to have more meetings.

Question – how much advance notice will members have for the meetings?

Doug Baughman mentioned the calendar exercise and potential locations for future meetings. He noted that the potential facility should accommodate about 35 members and should have presentation capability. The WPC members each identified the dates that would NOT work for future meetings. Marci noted that the team would identify potential meeting dates and locations based on the information provided on the calendars and get back to the WPC with the final recommendations for our next meeting.

Marci asked members to review the contact list, and indicate any changes and their preferred mode of communication. Council members were asked whether e-mail notification is sufficient. The members were told that a website would be set up with all Council documents and information. Mr. Melvin Davis mentioned he only has dial-up; Mr. Bennet mentioned if EPD is sending a 100-page document they prefer getting hard copies. Several members agreed.

Most members agreed to rotate meeting locations around the basin. Members from Milledgeville volunteered to host Council meetings.

Several Council members asked questions related to the meaning of public process or public meeting.

- Will the public be invited?
- Will a council member be able to bring an expert to explain their positions?
- What is the rule for substitutes?
- Will the public be able to speak in the meeting?

Terry Cole clarified that the Council meetings could be compared to a “commissioner work session” instead of a “public meeting.” The public will be notified and invited to observe, but not necessarily

participate in the decision making process during a work session. There will be periods for public comments after the draft WDCP is completed.

- Will the process be modeled similar to the Metro process?

Doug explained that the regional water planning process is different from the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) process; there will not be a Technical Advisory Committee in the regional planning process. The regional council members will be the main members working to obtain the solutions with the consultants. The consultant will provide and explain technical information collected by various EPD contractors on water quality and quantity.

The following additional question was posed to the council and the resulting answers were recorded.

What are the most important features of the Upper Oconee basin that the Council needs to consider? *Answer: Big difference between the northern and southern part of the basin*

Additional feedback

- More Council members would like to see the Oconee River Basin report
- Include member e-mail list to DCA

6) Action Items

- Planning Contractor to schedule next meeting and notify Council members