



2014 Activities & Progress Report

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District



2014 Board Members

Elected Officials

The Hon. Boyd Austin, Jr. (*District Chair*)
Mayor, Dallas, Paulding County

The Hon. Kasim Reed
Mayor, City of Atlanta

The Hon. Steve Taylor
Commissioner, Bartow County

The Hon. L.B. "Buzz" Ahrens, Jr.
Chairman, Cherokee County Commission

The Hon. Jeff Turner
Chairman, Clayton County Commission

The Hon. Tim Lee
Chairman, Cobb County Commission

The Hon. Bob Blackburn
Chairman, Coweta County Commission

The Hon. Lee May
Interim CEO, DeKalb County

The Hon. Tom Worthan
Chairman, Douglas County Commission

The Hon. Steve Brown
Chairman, Fayette County Commission

The Hon. Pete Amos
Chairman, Forsyth County Commission

The Hon. John Eaves
Chairman, Fulton County Commission

The Hon. Charlotte Nash
Chairman, Gwinnett County Commission

The Hon. Danny Dunagan
Mayor, Gainesville, Hall County

The Hon. Tommy Smith
Chairman, Henry County Commission

The Hon. Richard Oden
Chairman, Rockdale County Commission

Citizen Members

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Birdel Jackson (*Secretary/Treasurer*), Alpharetta

Pam Burnett, Marietta

William Thomas Craig, Covington

Bradley Currey, Jr., Atlanta

Kit Dunlap, Gainesville

Chuck Huling, Mableton

Gerald Pouncey, Jr., Atlanta

Tim Thoms, Fayetteville

Steven Woodruff, Canton

About the Metro Water District

In 2001, the Georgia General Assembly established the Metro Water District and formed a framework for creating comprehensive plans for water supply and conservation, wastewater and watershed management in metro Atlanta. The District adopted the first set of plans in 2003. Since then, it has worked in partnership with local and state governments in the 15-county planning area to implement and strengthen the plans. The next update of the three resource plans is due in 2016, a timeline that is consistent with the 10 other water planning councils throughout the state.



Chairman's Message

As the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District prepares to undertake its second water plan update, we do so as recognized leaders in regional water resources planning. We find ourselves celebrating significant accomplishments, but also facing continuing and emerging challenges. We take seriously our responsibility for water supply and conservation, wastewater and watershed planning in the 15-county metro Atlanta area, and we recognize that no other region in the U.S. brings together as many jurisdictions, water systems and stakeholders. We are comprised of a Governing Board, a Technical Coordinating Committee and Basin Advisory Councils who share ideas and best practices, develop regional water policy, plan for our future and support implementation of those plans.

The Metro District is recognized as a national leader for good reason. Thanks to one of the most effective water conservation programs in the country, since 2000 our overall water demand has decreased by 10 percent even though our population grew by more than one million people. And our per capita water use continues to go down. Our watershed plan promotes the tools needed to address the impacts of non-point source pollution and provides a framework for implementing appropriate local ordinances. Our wastewater plan demonstrates that our systems are well designed and will be able to meet future demands – all while ensuring the highest possible water quality. Tying this all together is an education and outreach program that is first rate. The District's program reaches all age groups and a wide range of water users and policymakers.

This active plan implementation, coupled with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's enforcement of the plan's provisions, demonstrates a clear commitment to investing in the region's future. While we have accomplished a lot, much work remains – not least of which is the upcoming plan update which bears the theme of integrated planning. The update, scheduled for completion in late 2016, will be guided by the recognition that, as the lines blur between water management disciplines, integration reflects a modern approach to water planning. The District's approach to integrated water planning will reduce redundancies, leverage the diverse perspectives of experts and promote measures based on a clearer understanding of impacts and outcomes. Another important dimension of the plan update is that this will be the first time the District's work will be coordinated with the other 10 statewide water planning councils. This opportunity represents an important step toward integrated, comprehensive state-wide water planning.

While we advance our water stewardship and plan implementation, we recognize challenges remain. In November of this year, two courtroom battles over water supply in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) and Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) basins were renewed. In the first, the U.S. Supreme Court granted Florida's October 2013 motion to sue Georgia for an "equitable apportionment" of the waters of the ACF basin. The suit is focused on increasing freshwater flows into Apalachicola Bay to support its oyster industry. As noted in Georgia's brief to the Supreme Court, Georgia is not to blame for the collapse of the oyster industry; the collapse is due in part to Florida's mismanagement of the oyster industry, immediately followed by a major drought, which decreased freshwater flows across the basin.

In the second – and separate – case, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority and the state of Georgia have filed lawsuits against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The suits stem from the Corps's failure to act on water supply requests in the ACT River Basin that have been pending for more than 30 years. The Corps recently released a new water control plan for Allatoona Lake that does not address the water supply issues that have remained unresolved for decades. The suit asks the court to direct the Corps to clarify how much water metro Atlanta can get from Allatoona Lake, one of the region's primary sources of drinking water.

As we take stock of our accomplishments in 2014 and begin to update our water plan, we find ourselves at a pivotal point. With a rebounding regional economy and two new lawsuits concerning the waters upon which we rely and the ongoing potential for drought, it is clear that the District's regional leadership is more important than ever. We are proud of our stewardship story, but we recognize the need to advance, innovate and ensure the region has the water it needs to support the quality of life and economic prosperity that makes us a global leader. On behalf of the Governing Board the Technical Coordinating Committee, Basin Advisory Councils and the District staff, we appreciate and look forward to your continued support and participation.



Mayor Boyd Austin
Metro Water District Chair



Education and Outreach

Education and outreach are critical components of the Metro Water District plans. In 2014, the District updated and developed new education and outreach material for use throughout the region. More than 20,000 educational materials were distributed by the District. These materials range from brochures to storm drain stencils. My Drop Counts and Clean Water Campaign tips and public service announcements aired on local access stations and will continue to do so in the coming year.

The District launched two new contests in 2014. These contests targeted high school students and adults. The *FOG Clogs!* High School Video Contest was a big hit with high school students. More than 200 students participated. The winning video was created by Gwinnett County's Lanier High School senior Benjamin Lewin. He and the second and third place winners were honored at the June Board meeting. The 2014 Water Reflections Calendar Photo Contest participants were asked to capture the beauty, heritage, activities and character of metro Atlanta's water resources as well as to describe what the water resource in their photo entry meant to them. More than 60 professional and amateur photographers participated in the contest, with more than 120 photo entries taken at locations all over the region. The cover photo, *Reflections* by David Di Cristina, is our Grand Prize winner and is featured for the month of February.

In March, the District and partners hosted the second annual Water Drop Dash 5K and Water Festival at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell. More than 700 people ran the race, and several hundred more participated in various events. This event once again kicked off the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Fix a Leak Week, which encourages everyone to find and fix leaks in and around their home. Participants of the 5K had an opportunity to learn more about our region's water resources through the family-friendly water festival, which followed the race.

The 13th Annual Water Essay Contest continued to grow in 2014. Nearly 240 teachers from 130 schools and more than 2,600 students participated in this year's contest. The 2014 District-wide winner was Emma Camp, a 7th grader from The Walker School in Cobb County. Winners were honored at an awards reception at the Georgia State Capitol in December.

For more than a decade, several utilities in the District have held the annual Wonders of Water Children's Water Festival for 4th grade students. This half-day event has educated several thousand students on important water topics through fun hands-on activities. Through the District's support, an additional Children's Water Festival was held this past year and an additional 450 fourth grade students gained this valuable experience.





Water Supply and Water Conservation

The Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan is the Metro Water District's framework for protecting and ensuring an adequate water supply – for present and future demands. In addition to identifying needs for future storage, the plan relies on 19 water conservation measures to help achieve this goal. Through these conservation measures, the Metro Water District has continued to move the region forward as a leader in water conservation and efficiency.

2014 was a hallmark year in conservation efforts across all sectors – from the demand side with residential and commercial customers – to the supply side with utility-driven efforts to reduce leaks. Utilities across the Metro Water District have stepped up their efforts in promoting toilet rebate programs and their hard work has paid off. The Metro Water District is proud to claim that since 2008 more than 100,000 inefficient toilets have been replaced with higher efficiency models – this has amounted to a more than 575 million gallons savings of water per year.

Commercial customers have also increased their commitment to efficiency. In 2014 alone, utilities across the District have performed more than 100 commercial water audits. These audits included an evaluation of current water usage as well as offering technical support to identify leaks, reduce consumption and upgrading to higher efficiency fixtures and equipment.

On the supply side, the Metro Water District continued their efforts in supporting utilities in identifying and reducing system leaks. Over the past three years, utilities have identified and repaired more than 23,000 leaks.



2014 Calendar Contest Entries

Jim McCallum – Ice Storm

“Although unpleasant for travel and sometimes dangerous, water from the sky in all of its forms adds to necessary groundwater.”



James Quattlebaum – Old Mill at Stone Mountain

“This old mill gives me a respect for human ingenuity and the power of water.”



Pixie Collins – Fishin’ Heron

“Kayaking early in the morning and late in the afternoon is heavenly. I feel as if this reservoir is my own private paradise. I know my fishing buddies enjoy it just as much!”

Jaqueline Echols – Canoeing the South River

“Restoration of urban rivers is relatively rare because they are usually viewed as beyond repair or not worthy of repair. This is a shortsighted view because urban areas are where most people live and it is important that urban communities have access to nature and the benefits that a healthy river and ecosystem can offer.”





Leticia Andrade – Morning Ride

"I live by Kedron Lake and its waters take my breath away. The lake is beautiful and a part of everyone's lives. The golf cart paths surround the lake and make life in Peachtree City a joy. I'm never tired of photographing this beauty!"

Chase Matheson – Deep in Thought

"This water resource holds many childhood memories. It provides us with drinking water, amazing fishing and stunning natural scenery. A popular tourist destination with many features including the island's waterpark. Summer fun!"



Desiree Griffiths – Golden Repose at Lake Allatoona

"To me, this water resource means serenity. A place to see an incredibly beautiful lake and all of the majesty surrounding it. Being out on it in our canoe gives my husband, myself and our 13 year old daughter a chance to be as one with this vast, gorgeous lake. Such peace!"

Jeff Westland – Leaf at Allatoona Landing

"The Allatoona Landing area is a place I love to photograph. It is an area shared by wildlife and people, history and present. I hope the lake and park areas can be preserved for all to enjoy."



Wastewater Management

The Wastewater Management Plan details strategies and recommendations for comprehensive wastewater management to meet future demand for wastewater treatment across metro Atlanta. The plan includes initiatives focused on the management of privately owned septic systems, grease management, local master planning and sewer system asset management – to name a few. In total, the plan addresses the management of 92 publicly owned treatment facilities, more than 16,000 miles of sanitary sewer lines, more than 45,000 manholes and 500,000 septic systems in the District.

Since the adoption of the first Wastewater Management Plan in 2003, wastewater utilities have continued to implement the required wastewater management programs and educate their citizens. Of all respondents to the 2014 Implementation Survey, 91 percent report they have enacted a program for prioritizing and performing needed sanitary sewer rehabilitation projects. This program ensures rehabilitation projects identified during system inspections are properly recorded and implemented. Additionally, 74 percent report having begun the development of a training program for sewer system inspection and maintenance.

In 2014, the top three causes of reported sewer spills were attributed to grease, tree roots and structural defects. With approximately half of all sewer spills resulting from clogs due to fats, oils and grease (FOG), the District will continue its outreach efforts to engage residents and businesses in ways to keep FOGs out of the sewer systems.





Watershed Management

The Watershed Management Plan provides the framework for regional water resources protection within the 15-county Metro Water District, and is one of the nation's most comprehensive and holistic regional programs for stormwater management and watershed protection. The Plan's integrated approach prescribes both required and recommended measures for effective stormwater and watershed management to meet the overall goal of healthy watersheds and the protection and improvement of water quality.

A major goal of the Watershed Management Plan is for local jurisdictions to address local stormwater challenges. One way these local jurisdictions use the plan to address challenges is by creating local provisions for maintenance of stormwater facilities within private developments. Of the jurisdictions that responded to the 2014 Implementation Survey, approximately 84 percent have local provisions for addressing these facilities.

Another goal of the Watershed Plan is to protect greenspace and encourage the use of green infrastructure to manage stormwater and protect our watersheds. Of the jurisdictions that responded to the 2014 Implementation Survey, 82 percent have some mechanism for using greenspace or green infrastructure to protect water quality. However, of the jurisdictions that do not, many say they want more information or assistance in developing local tools. Further, 36 percent of the jurisdictions that responded to the survey want assistance in taking on watershed improvement projects.

The feedback obtained through the Implementation Survey helps the District in several ways. It confirms that local governments see the value of green infrastructure in watershed protections. It also demonstrates commitment among the jurisdictions to manage water resources within the District wisely and well.

The 2014 Implementation Reviews continue to show that the local jurisdictions are fully committed to managing the District's water resources in an efficient and effective way.



Advisory Councils and Committees

In addition to the Governing Board, two advisory groups play a key role in the District's planning process. The Basin Advisory Councils are public stakeholder groups based in each of the District's six water basins that offer essential perspectives to the District and its Governing Board. Members of the advisory councils include water and power industry professionals, representatives from business and civic groups, environmentalists, recreation enthusiasts, agriculture representatives and interested citizens. The Technical Coordinating Committee is made up of professionals in each planning area. The District relies on this group to provide technical expertise and recommendations.

This year, the advisory councils and technical committees focused their efforts on the 2016 plan update. Multiple meetings for each group engaged members (in small group roundtable discussions) to solicit input for setting the vision and drafting its goals and objectives. This process greatly expanded the amount of input that the District staff received from the groups. Altogether, the two groups generated more than 80 pages of goals and objectives to be considered for the 2016 plan update.

In addition to the comments for the plan update process, the Basin Advisory Councils toured a number of facilities within the District's basins including Buford Dam, the Tussahaw Water Treatment Plant, Hickory Log Creek Dam and the water-saving infrastructure of the Manheim Auto Action facility.



Basin Advisory Councils

Chattahoochee – Chair, *Charles McKinney* | 68 members

Coosa/Etowah – Chair, *Doris Cook* | 37 members

Flint – Chair, *Clint Tankersley* | 19 members

Lake Lanier – Chair, *Val Perry* | 23 members

Ocmulgee – Chair, *Lee Pope* | 34 members

Oconee – Chair, *Jill Stachura* | 11 members

Technical Coordinating Committee

More than 100 active members participated in 11 subcommittee and working group meetings in 2014.

2014 Financials

The Metro Water District operates on a calendar-year budget, with the majority of the revenues coming from local government dues (\$1,039,040) and the State of Georgia (\$250,000). For 2014, local government dues were \$0.215 per capita (based on the 2010 Census).

The following is a review of the revenues and expenses for 2014. This accounting is subject to adjustment after fiscal year-end close and independent audit.

Financials for 2015

In December of this year, the District Governing Board adopted a final budget of \$1,967,727 for 2015, with the majority of the revenues coming from local governments (\$1,280,677) and the state (\$250,000). The increased fund balance is needed to prepare for the expenses of the 2016 plan update. The District Governing Board approved staggered dues increases for 2014 to 2016 to minimize the impact of a large, one-time dues increase. For the 2015 budget, dues will be \$0.265 per capita (based on the 2010 Census).



	2014 Budget Adopted June 6, 2013	2014 End of Year Budget Revision
Beginning Fund Balance	\$791,049	\$810,668
Revenues		
Direct State Funding	\$250,000	\$250,000
Local Dues (2010 Census at \$0.215 per capita)	\$1,039,040	\$1,039,040
Interest Income	\$2,000	\$2,000
Misc. Fees	\$60,000	\$60,000
Designated "I'm In" (My Drop Counts) Carryover		\$43,000
Total Revenues	\$1,351,040	\$1,394,040
Expenses by Type		
Chairman's Allowance	\$3,000	\$500
District Planning Function		
Salaries	\$398,927	\$398,927
Fringe Benefits	\$229,616	\$229,616
Contracts	\$370,000	\$125,000
Overhead	\$282,845	\$260,845
Miscellaneous Operating	\$77,200	\$77,200
Public Awareness / Education	\$150,000	\$135,000
Total Expenses		\$1,227,088

Projected Ending Fund Balance \$977,620



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