



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
OCMULGEE BASIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Summary
April 23, 2010**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Ocmulgee Basin Advisory Council met on Friday, April 23, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Henry County Water & Sewerage Authority Engineering Building in McDonough, Georgia.

Members Present

Larry Allen	Vikki McReynolds, BAC Chair
Michael Blackburn	Petra Parker, Comm. Atlanta Board of Realtors
Scott Cole, Sr.	Luis Torres
Tonja Halton-Mincey, Henry Co W&SA	Susan Varlamoff, UGA
Tom Harrison, H2O Reps	Michael Walker
Shirley House	Steve Williams, Building Greener LLC
Deirdre Faye Lyons-Gary, League of Women Voters	

Members Not Present

Cassandra Barber	Lawrence Kaiser
Scott Brumbelow, GA Utility Contractors	Mark Landers, U.S. Geological Survey
Jimmy Carter, Jr.	Martin McElhenny
Richard Edinger, Jr.	Paul Morgan
Roger Hatch, Rockdale/DeKalb Farm Bureau	Jack Tanner, City of McDonough
Wayne Haynie, Jordan, Jones & Goulding Inc.	

Non Ocmulgee BAC Members Present

Jennifer Christman, CERM
Russell Tonning, GA Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Metro Water District Staff Present

Heather Moody, Senior Program Specialist
Charlene Njoroge, Education and Public Awareness Coordinator

Welcome and Introductions

Ocmulgee BAC Chair Vikki McReynolds introduced Mr. Lee Pope, Rockdale County Board Designee, who began the meeting by welcoming the group on behalf of the Metro Water District Board.

Local Government Panel Discussion of Metro Water District Plan Implementation

Local water supply, wastewater and stormwater professionals representing jurisdictions within the Ocmulgee Basin participated in a panel discussion with BAC members. The Ocmulgee panel consisted of Tonja Halton-Mincey from Henry County Water and Sewerage Authority, Lee Pope from Rockdale County Water Resources and Kevin Osbey from Clayton County Water Authority. Panel participants shared their successes and challenges in implementing the Metro Water District's three Water Management plans.

Panel participants highlighted the following successes related to Metro Water District Plan implementation:

- Water quality improvements
- Plant upgrades
- Creation of new reservoirs and constructed wetlands
- Partnerships with Rivers Alive for cleanups and with Lowes for fix-a-leak day

Panel participants cited the following challenges related to Metro Water District Plan implementation:

- Education of elected officials
- Paradigm shift from wanting to sell more water to trying to conserve water
- Difficult to get county leaders on board with conservation and set aside enough funding for conservation initiatives

BAC members and panel participants had the following questions and comments during the discussion:

- In Dekalb County, there are publicly owned areas that are still inundated with debris from the floods, and private homeowners are also requesting help removing flood debris that washed up on their property. There is no funding source available to clean it all up, but if it is not removed it will cause additional problems in the future.
- Counties would like to help citizens with debris and erosion on their property but can only get involved if it is part of a watershed improvement program or if the debris is encroaching on a sewer outfall or near a culvert.
- Some residents are frustrated because they feel that their stormwater utility fees entitle them to receive help with their clean-up.
- Counties should focus on education in order to change homeowner perceptions. They need to tell residents why they pay stormwater fees and provide more details about how the money is used.
- Counties should talk about the issues that are hindering the clean up, such as permitting problems and difficult access for crews and equipment.
- FEMA and the Emergency Watershed Protection Program is working with city and county governments on flooding issues.
- Local governments should be proactive and enforce 75 foot stream buffers throughout the state.
- Stream weirs could slow the water velocity and help lessen flooding impacts, but there are no definitive rules about their use.

- In September, the flood control structures were the bridges, therefore many of them sustained extensive damage.
- Mapping programs and flood inundation models can simulate failures of control structures and help jurisdictions prepare.
- Why not use more green infrastructure to address stormwater issues?
- Many jurisdictions purchase greenspace around rivers, streams and creeks for public parks and restoration programs.
- A bond funded greenspace purchasing initiative in Dekalb county caused prices of some property to skyrocket in response to the program. The program became cost prohibitive.
- The green approach doesn't always prevent problems from happening. We need to look at all available technologies and do what makes the most sense.
- We need to push innovative solutions and get everyone to do it if we want to make a difference, even if stormwater fees have to be raised.

2009 Education and Public Awareness Poll Results

Charlene Njoroge with the Metro Water District presented a summary of the 2009 Education and Public Awareness telephone poll results. The purpose of this poll is to call 400 residents within the Metro Water District and gauge their level of awareness about water quality and water conservation issues. Ms. Njoroge explained that the poll results show basic water quality and conservation messages should be the focus of future public awareness and education efforts.

Clean Water Campaign Media Campaign

Ms. Njoroge gave a brief overview of the proposed 2010 Clean Water Campaign Media Plan. She discussed the messages, target audiences and suggested media for the 2010 Campaign. She then asked the BAC members for additional ideas and feedback.

BAC members had the following suggestions:

- Utilize social networking sites like Youtube, Facebook and Twitter.
- It is extremely important to educate young people.
- The Soil and Water Conservation District has a tremendous amount of educational materials available. These materials could be distributed to the schools through local governments. It is more efficient to share materials and unify resources.

BAC Membership Drive

Heather Moody reminded the BAC members that the 2010 Basin Advisory Council recruitment drive is underway and asked that current members help to identify new members. Ms. Moody explained that the Metro Water District is particularly interested in finding additional members for the Lake Lanier and Oconee BACs. She said that interested individuals should be directed to the BAC webpage or provided with her contact information. Ms. Moody also reminded everyone that the deadline to submit membership applications is May 14, 2010.

The next meeting will be held on July 23, 2010. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.