



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
COOSA / ETOWAH BASIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Summary
January 19, 2010**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Coosa/Etowah Basin Advisory Council met on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. at the Woodstock Public Library in Woodstock, GA.

Members Present

Doris Cook, Etowah W&S	William Francis, GAWP
William Grizzle, Cherokee Co Farm Bureau	John Hicks, LAPA
Nolton Johnson	Dart Kendall, GOWA
David Kubala, Cherokee W&SA	H. Luke Mayes, Cobb Co Farm Bureau
Robert Morrison, LAPA	Carol Moson, GA Association of Realtors
Ed Mullinax, LAPA/Cartersville Water Dept	Bettie Sleeth, Home Builders Assn of GA
Douglas Sowar, Paulding Co Farm Bureau	Roy Taylor
Martha Williams, Georgia Lakes Society	

Members Not Present

Patricia Braithwaite	David Cervone, Obrien & Gere
James Durham	Celia Klardie, City of Canton
Barry Mansell, BAC Chair	Donald Salkman
Christina Williams, City of Cartersville	

Non Coosa/Etowah BAC Members Present

Bruce Carlisle
Kelen Shostak, City of Woodstock

Metro Water District Staff Present

Matt Harper, Senior Principal Planner
Heather Moody, Senior Program Specialist
Corey Babb, Senior Environmental Planner
Abby Owens, Senior Environmental Planner

Welcome and Introductions

Heather Moody with the Metro Water District introduced David Kubala, Cherokee County Board Designee, who began the meeting by welcoming the group on behalf of the Metro Water District Board.

Grease Management Public Education

Corey Babb of the Metro Water District presented ideas for a new public education initiative about the harmful impacts of fats, oils and grease (FOG) on local sewer systems and asked the BAC members for their suggestions.

BAC members shared the following ideas and suggestions:

- Commercial food establishments are monitored through a permitting process, they are not the problem. Most stoppages in the systems are from residential causes.
- Single family and multi-family residential properties are equally important and should both be addressed.
- Bill stuffers are effective.
- Teach children in schools and they will educate their parents.
- Provide education materials in grocery stores.
- Create public service announcements and TV spots
- Get information on our website
- Consider sending a spokesperson to appear on local public involvement shows like WSB's People2 People.
- Get information into subdivision/homeowner newsletters
- Consider measures to discourage garbage disposals. These are especially a problem for septic systems
- Direct marketing is most effective
- Encourage good behavior, discourage bad behavior and then let people make their own choices. Don't mandate.
- Many utilities send a postcard bill, not an envelope, so bill stuffers won't be an option for some.
- Many people opt for electronic billing only. Can the utility's website have FOG information on the online bill payment page?
- Consider public education through social media sites
- Any message needs to be consistent and ongoing
- What is the cost of fixing grease problems? Is it worth the time and effort considering the potential benefit?
- The problem will not go away, grease keeps accumulating and eventually will have to be dealt with.
- Grease is a problem at wastewater plants, and source reduction is easier and cheaper than treating for grease at the plant. It must be physically removed.
- Grease and the resulting sewer overflows are also a stormwater issue. Grease public outreach could be incorporated into jurisdiction's existing education efforts and go towards the education requirement for MS-4 stormwater permits.
- Determine a dollar amount that dealing with grease problems costs the water customers and use that figure in public education

Discussion of Potential New Water Conservation Measures

Abby Owens of the Metro Water District lead a discussion on potential new water conservation measures that are being considered in addition to those already included in the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan. He explained that this is a proactive step in response to Judge Magnuson's ruling regarding Lake Lanier and the 2012 deadline.

BAC members shared the following ideas and suggestions:

- Consider recommending Water Sense requirements for new homes state wide.
- The Home Builders Association promotes Water Sense as an incentive program. Builders also get marketing benefits because of homebuyer preferences. However, consumers must be educated about Water Sense so they will look for those products.
- Georgia Association of Realtors is strongly opposed to retrofit on resale measures. Programs should be incentive based, not mandated.
- Consumers need to be able to choose between spending money on conservation efforts or spending on more costly water.
- The Metro Water District needs to address interbasin transfer and require that all water be returned to source basin.
- Use of porous pavers and concrete should be required where possible.
- The region needs to do a better job incorporating water reuse.
- We should provide people with choices because costs and benefits and how people view the choices will differ. We should be careful what we dictate.
- Most people will make good choices given the right incentives and disincentives.
- Expand the use of rainwater harvesting for flushing toilets.
- Allow subsurface irrigation only in times of drought.
- Can't conservation pricing solve the problem? Water prices should be higher during a drought.
- Look into roadblocks to conservation measures and attempt to resolve them.
- The Home Builders Association prefers conservation measures go through the plumbing code process rather than through the legislative process.
- Homebuyers are conservation minded and it has been documented that people will pay more for energy and water conservation appliances if they will save money in the long run.
- The Chattahoochee and Lanier basins do need to do more to increase their water conservation.
- Georgia's drought is a man-made problem. We need to ban together as a state. If it is the right thing to do, then it should be good for the entire state.
- What about metering fire hydrant usage for line flushing?
- Metering fire trucks is a bad idea and would be fought.
- Nothing should be mandated, offer incentives or focus on making good choices available at point of replacement.

BAC members were asked to email additional feedback on FOG public education and additional water conservation measures to Heather Moody by January 29th.

2009 Annual Report & Implementation Report

Heather Moody of the Metro Water District reviewed the 2009 Annual Report and the 2009 Plan Implementation Review. She described the two documents and how they interrelate and showed members where to locate information.

Joint Water Council Meetings / State Resource Assessment Update

Matt Harper of the Metro Water District provided an overview of the upcoming Joint Water Council meetings and State Resource Assessments. Mr. Harper informed the group that the resource assessments will be the basis for the state water planning process moving forward and will guide permitting decisions in the future. He explained that the state is conducting three different resource assessments for each river basin in the state; a surface water quality assessment, a surface water quantity assessment and a groundwater availability assessment. He told the group that the resource assessments will affect the Metro Water District and that staff will follow the process.

Mr. Harper explained that GA EPD is planning two rounds of Joint Water Planning Council meetings; one in January to present the assessments based on current use and another round later this spring to discuss the assessments based on future use. GA EPD will release a formal report in February for the current resource assessments followed by a public comment period. He told the group that staff will forward the resource assessment documents to the BAC members when they become available.

Metro Water District's 2010 Legislative Agenda

Matt Harper of the Metro Water District reviewed the 2010 Metro Water District Legislative Agenda. The BAC members were provided with a copy of the 2010 Legislative Agenda adopted by the Metro Water District Board on December 3, 2009.

The next meeting will be held on April 20, 2010. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.