



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
LAKE LANIER & OCONEE BASIN ADVISORY COUNCILS
Meeting Summary
April 14, 2010**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Lake Lanier and Oconee Basin Advisory Councils met on Wednesday, April 14, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Forsyth County Administration Building in Cumming, GA.

Lake Lanier BAC Members Present

Drew Addison
Bob Evans, GA Green Industry Association
Mary Jones
Larry Long
Tim Merritt
Val Perry, BAC Chair
Ike Swofford

Oconee BAC Members Present

J. Steven Landers, Land Planning Consultants
Steve Payne, Braselton Utilities
Jill Stachura, BAC Chair
Sheryl Wells, UGA

Lake Lanier BAC Members Not Present

James Hazelwood, StoneHenge Consultants
Dale Jaeger, The Jaeger Company
Wilton Rooks, Scenic Georgia, Inc.

Oconee BAC Members Not Present

Becki van der Walt, GA Green Industry Association
Chris Yancey

Metro Water District Staff Present

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

Welcome and Introductions

Lanier BAC Chair Val Perry welcomed the group and asked the members to introduce themselves. He then introduced Forsyth County Board Designee Jon Heard, who officially 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 Lanier and Oconee Basins participated in a panel discussion with BAC members. The Lanier/Oconee panel consisted of Horace Gee from City of Gainesville, Renee Hoge from Forsyth County and Steve Payne from the Town of Braselton. 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:

- Stream restoration projects in Forsyth County and the City of Gainesville
- Public outreach programs
- Partnerships with groups such as keep Forsyth Beautiful and Georgia Adopt a Stream
- Forsyth's creation of a general stormwater program
- Forsyth's selection as a WaterFirst community

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

- Keeping up with rapid growth
- Resistance to regulations
- Obtaining funding for implementation projects
- Educating community leaders and recruiting their support
- Meeting the requirements of the EPD audit process

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

- Implementation of the Plans can be more difficult for small cities because they have less money and less staff than larger jurisdictions. There should be reduced implementation requirements for small cities.
- The intention behind the Plans is great but they can be difficult to execute. In order to implement the Plans more effectively we should focus on water quality results.
- Are communities exploring the possibility of creating a regional stormwater management facility instead of individual stormwater retention ponds?
- Creating facilities that serve multiple properties is an intriguing concept. If it's talked about more, some communities may become aware and decide to implement the idea.
- A regional facility would be easier for local governments to deal with from a regulatory standpoint compared to monitoring 1,400 individual detention facilities. However, regional facilities face obstacles related to funding, location and property rights.
- If we collect and use stormwater everyone wins because we would waste less potable water.
- Businesses would realize that stormwater catchment systems are cost effective if they add up all their water bills over the course of a year.
- Local jurisdictions would have to change their rate structures if stormwater was used indoors. Currently sewer fees are based on levels of water use. If captured rainwater was put into the system, sewer billing would no longer accurately reflect true wastewater treatment volume.

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.

BAC members shared the following comments:

- Education through the schools is a very important way to get the message out.
- Although the poll indicates people believe wastewater plants are the primary source of water pollution, that is not the case. For example, in the City of Gainesville wastewater discharges to Flat Creek actually improve the water quality.

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:

- Look into advertising at large public venues like the Georgia Dome. Perhaps a message could be included on the drink cups that they sell. That would be a great way to reach a lot of people at once.
- Consider reaching out to the Turner Foundation. They are interested in educating people about water protection.
- Chick-fil-a seems to be environmentally conscious and is locally based. Perhaps the message can be printed on kid's meals or on placemats.
- Having a local celebrity deliver the message would get attention.
- Partner with colleges and universities to include messages in campus newspapers or on reusable mugs.

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 14, 2010. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.