



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
OCMULGEE BASIN ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Summary
April 22, 2011**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Ocmulgee Basin Advisory Council met on Friday, April 22, 2011 at 11:30 a.m. at Arabia Mountain High School in Lithonia, GA.

Members Present

Michael Walker, URPS, BAC Chair
Todd Cosby, Rockdale Co Stormwater
Richard Edinger, Jr.
Tom Harrison, H2O Reps
Chee Hill, Dewberry & Davis
Shirley House
Angel Jones, DeKalb Co Roads Drainage
Deirdre Faye Lyons-Gary, DeKalb Co LWV

Jay Marlow
Vikki McReynolds, GUCA
Tonja Halton-Mincey, Henry Co W&SA
Paul Morgan, Rainharvest Co. Inc.
Susan Varlamoff, UGA
Steve Williams, Building Greener LLC
Kirk Wimber, Orenco Systems

Members Not Present

Larry Allen
Cassandra Barber
Michael Blackburn
Jimmy Carter, Jr., HCWA and Henry Co Farm Bur.
Jennifer Christman, ADS
Scott Cole, Sr.
Glenn Fountain, Southwest Water - Thomaston

Roger Hatch, Rockdale/DeKalb Farm Bureau
Wayne Haynie, Jordan, Jones & Goulding Inc.
Lawrence Kaiser, CIS, Inc.
Mark Landers, U.S. Geological Survey
Petra Parker
Luis Torres

Board Members Present

Lee Pope, Rockdale County Designee

Non-Members Present

Kevin Farrell, GA EPD
Angela Pringle, Principal Arabia Mountain HS
Patrice Nisbeth, URPS
Terrell Gibbs, Rockdale County
Jazmine Daniel, student

Leticha Heflin, student
Mariah Allen, student
Kerris Solomon, student
Corey Harper, student

Metro Water District Staff Present

Matt Harper, Senior Principal Planner
Sarah Simmons, Senior Program Specialist
Marissa Duff, Senior Environmental Planner

Welcome and Introductions

Rockdale County Board Representative Lee Pope welcomed the group on behalf of the Metro Water District Board and officially began the meeting. He introduced Tim Wells, Assistant Principal of Arabia Mountain High School, to welcome us to the facility and say a few words about the high school. Mr. Wells then introduced BAC Chair Mike Walker who initiated group introductions. The BAC was pleased to have in attendance Kevin Farrell with GA EPD. Sarah Simmons began with the meeting material by introducing the "I'm In" Business Cards as a kick off to the District's "I'm In" campaign. She asked the members to make sure they visit the website and make their pledge as a business, government, organization, or individual. Additionally, she asked the members to take a stack of cards to pass out and spread the word about the campaign.

BAC Membership Drive

Sarah Simmons informed the group that the 2011 BAC Membership Drive is currently underway. The District is asking that all members reapply for membership this year to ensure that we have a variety of interests represented on each of the councils, and to get all members on the same timeframe for membership. She informed the group that the deadline is May 13th and that applications are on the handouts table at the back of the room should anyone want to fill one out at the meeting or take a stack to hand out to others who may be interested in BAC membership. Ms. Simmons also informed the group of the process through which applications will be approved. There were no comments or questions made regarding the BAC membership drive.

Rockdale County Proposed Plan Amendments

Matt Harper spoke to the group about the plan amendments that were proposed by Rockdale County earlier this year. He explained the process through which the amendments were taken and what could be expected moving forward. Terrell Gibbs with Rockdale Water Resources was in attendance to answer specific questions about the proposed amendments.

The BAC members had the following questions and comments:

- No public comments were received on the Rockdale County plan amendments.
- What do the amendments entail?
- What is the integrity of the plants? The permits will be reissued with new limits that are more stringent.
- Have there been any spills as some of the northern counties of the metro area have experience, and how often?
- What is Rockdale County doing to help clean up the Yellow River? Rockdale Water Resources does not discharge into the Yellow River.
- Have you been monitoring what is leaving DeKalb County and coming into Rockdale County, especially right at the county line? There are sampling points, and that water quality at those points has been improving.
- What would happen if the plan amendments were not approved? Nowhere does it say, "If these amendments are not approved, *this* is what will happen". Homes in those areas would remain on septic because sewer capacity would not be available.
- The amendment request does not say where the proposed reclamation facilities would be.
- Would reclamation facilities pull septic off the side of the river?

- Why is Rockdale County pushing the facility so far in the future?
- Can you work with other agencies to get the new facility operational in a quicker timeframe?
- Will you build for the future need of Rockdale County?

Water Metrics Report Overview

Marissa Duff gave an overview of the Water Metrics Report. This report presents water use data, wastewater return trends, and water quality data. She explained that water demand is affected by a variety of factors and care should be taken when comparing the Atlanta region to other communities. In the past decade, population has increased while overall water use and per capita water use have decreased. Wastewater returns to each basin are increasing and water quality has been maintained or improved despite a significant population increase since the 1970s when monitoring began. She explained that the water metrics report confirms our progress in the implementation of best management practices as they relate to water supply and conservation, wastewater, and watershed management. There were no comments or questions made regarding the Water Metrics Report.

Status of WaterSense New Homes Conservation Measure

Marissa Duff gave a presentation on the status of WaterSense New Homes Conservation Measure. She presented a supplementary guidance document developed by a subcommittee made up of representatives of homebuilders, the green industry, US EPA, UGA, and local water systems that outlines outdoor best management practices to be used by builders/developers as they implement the water budget tool outlined by WaterSense. In addition Ms. Duff presented the revised WaterSense New Homes draft conservation measures. This measure has been revised to be an incentive based program, requiring local governments to adopt an incentive policy for builders to construct homes that meet the WaterSense specifications. She explained that the WaterSense New Homes conservation measure is still in the beginning stages and will be presented to the WSWC TCC and District Board for review.

BAC members had the following questions and comments:

- What is the reason behind making this measure voluntary and not mandatory? Because building new homes has slowed, we want to avoid adding the extra burden of a mandatory measure.
- It's not always good to make something mandatory because some people are actually willing to pay more.
- We should be careful about regulations and making fixtures mandatory. If it pays for itself, then it makes sense.
- If people install irrigation systems in a new home, we need to encourage them to install some sort of rain water harvesting system, as well.
- What is going to be the cost increase per house for developers? The District staff is researching different studies to try and solidify the numbers on cost.
- Who would issue the WaterSense certification? A WaterSense inspector would issue the certification.

Multifamily FOG Educational Material

Matt Harper gave an overview of the Multifamily FOG Educational Material and the efforts being made to reduce the buildup of fats, oils, and grease in the sewer systems of metro Atlanta. This particular material will be presented in the form of a door hanger, and will be given to residents of multifamily units.

BAC members had the following questions and comments:

- It is good that you are making it English and Spanish, but what about places that have multiple languages, dialects and cultures?
- How are you going to convince the owner of the apartment complex that this is an issue?
- Can you make FOG catch systems mandatory? We make bars and restaurants have grease traps.
- Have you thought about discouraging apartment complexes from installing garbage disposals?

Panel Discussion on Water Resource Education

For the April round of BACs, it was suggested that we focus on what is being done in the District regarding educating students and the public about water resources and water conservation. District staff assembled a panel of representatives from local schools, governments and non-profits to speak about their efforts. The following panelists were chosen for their outstanding work in water education:

- Tonja Halton-Mincey, Henry County Water and Sewer Authority
- Tim Wells, Assistant Principal Arabia Mountain High School
- Joseph Spann, Rockdale Water Resources

Each panelist gave a brief presentation and the floor was open to the BAC members for questions. BAC members had the following questions and comments:

- Regarding Arabia Mountain High School's Environment as an Integrated Context for Learning curriculum:
 - It was confirmed that the school currently has 1,300 students and expects next year's total to be 1,600. The capacity of the school is 1,500.
 - Are there any plans to create middle and elementary schools with the same Environment as Integrated Context for Learning (EIC) model? It was confirmed that Arabia Mountain High School has had a lot of inquiries about EIC and a lot of visitors, so they are hoping it will spread.
 - It was confirmed that the school motivates students to be engaged in the summer months by encouraging them to participate in internships and requiring summer homework.
 - Is there any coordination with other school districts to share resources?
 - How did the school get started? DeKalb County had the foresight to do this type of learning facility 10 years ago.
 - How do you keep the activities and curriculum fresh and new for the students each year? It was confirmed that many of the required projects are generated through student ideas.
 - Do you integrate EIC into your sports program? *Not at this time.*

- Do you have a way for students to teach students? Students present their senior projects to each other.

Other

Matt Harper gave a status update of the 2011 Legislative Session and several state water studies. This information was provided in the form of a handout. There were no questions regarding this material.

The next meeting will be a joint BAC meeting and will be held on July 22, 2011 at the Loudermilk Conference Center in Atlanta. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Tour of the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center

Assistant Principal Tim Wells gave interested BAC members a tour of the facility. He explained how an understanding of the environment is integrated in classrooms such as art, math, and even broadcasting.