



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

40 Courtland Street NE | Atlanta, Georgia 30303

**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District  
FLINT and OCMULGEE BASIN ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Summary  
April 22, 2015**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Flint and Ocmulgee Basin Advisory Councils met on Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Henry County Water Authority in McDonough, GA.

**Flint Members Present**

John Caldwell, City of Fairburn	Shayla Nealy
Roger Greuel, Fayette County Farm Bureau	Dale Phenicie, Fayette County Chamber of Commerce
Dorothy Harris, D. Cark Harris, Inc. & Airport Chamber	Tracy Thigpen, Coweta County Water and Sewer Authority
Bryan Keller, Fayette Co	Tim Thoms, Thoms Trees & Plants
Brice Martin, Coweta County Stormwater Mgmt.	

**Flint Members Not Present**

Dane Beatenbough, Coweta County	Kevin Jones
Vanessa Birrell, Fayette Co	Clinton Tankersley
William Brundage	Neil Tarver, UGA Cobb Co Coop. Ext.
Carole Dyce	Scott Tolar
Richard Greuel	Maureen Tompkins

**Ocmulgee Members Present**

Tara Brown, Henry County Water Authority	Chip Hatcher, Jr., Rockdale WSA
Billy Buckhalt	Elaine Nash, Citizen
James Carter, Henry Co Farm Bureau and HCWSA Board	Barbara Seal
Vikki Consiglio, GUCA	Joe Stickell
Todd Cosby, Rockdale Co Stormwater Division	Steven Williams, Aqua Engineering
Robert Harris, Jr., Gwinnett Co Department of Water Resources	

**Ocmulgee Members Not Present**

Babafemi Adesanya	Deirdre Lyons-Gary, DeKalb League of Women Voters/DCSWCD
Larry Allen, Henry County Farm Bureau	Robert Michener
Gary Campbell	Paul Morgan, RainHarvest Company
Ernest Earn	George Patterson, Henry County
Mark Eastland	Lee Pope, Fayette County Water System
Richard Edinger, Jr.	John Prokopovich
Mary Gazaway	Ken Sebastian
Antonio Harris	Jennifer Suttles
Tom Harrison	Peter Terrebonne
Jenny Hoffner, American Rivers	Lynn Thorndyke
Shirley House	Anthony Wiggins
Angel Jones, DeKalb County	

**District Staff and Consultant Team Present**

Danny Johnson, District Manager	Kristen Rowles, Policy Works
Chris Faulkner, District	Steve Simpson, Black & Veatch
Sarah Skinner, District	Brian Skeens, CH2M
Rick Brownlow, CH2M Project Manager	Chrissy Thom, CH2M
Doug Baughman, CH2M	

**Others Present**

Ben Emanuel, American Rivers	Tom Ridgway, Fairburn Utilities
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**Welcome and Introductions**

On Wednesday, April 22, the Flint and Ocmulgee BACs met at the Henry County Water Authority. Board Designee Tim Thoms (Flint BAC) and BAC Chair Steve Williams (Ocmulgee BAC) welcomed the group. Attendees included BAC members, District staff and the CH2M HILL consultant team working on the 2016 District plan update.

**2016 Water Resource Management Plan Schedule and Stakeholder Involvement Approach**

Danny Johnson (the District) reviewed slides that explained the Water Resource Management Plan schedule and process. Danny said that this update will utilize the existing recommendations and identify any potential revisions or new actions that need to be included in the plan. He also noted that the BAC's work on goals and objectives in 2014 helped to shape the material that will be the basis of today's BAC discussion.

### **Water Resource Management Plans Policy Review**

Rick Brownlow is the project manager for the CH2M HILL consultant team on the District's water plan update. He presented slides that provided a policy review for the 2009 plans. The slides highlighted policy changes and trends since the 2009 plans. The slides also identified implementation successes and opportunities for refinement and integration from the 2009 plan in each of the following areas: Water Supply, Wastewater, Watershed and Public Awareness and Education. This material will support the plan update in the review of the goals, objectives and evaluation criteria and the identification implementation actions.

Next, Kristin Rowles (Policy Works) with the consultant team facilitated a discussion with the BAC members on the plan review. She noted that the BAC's input through the goals and objectives discussion last year was an important source of information in preparing the policy review. She asked the members to comment on whether the implementation successes and opportunities for refinement and integration were accurate and whether the members would add anything to these lists. The following is a summary of the BAC members' feedback:

#### **Water Supply:**

- We need operations and management requirements for small reservoirs.
- We should provide information on best practices for small reservoir management. GA Power could be resource.
- Rainwater harvesting should be considered/supported.
- Flow releases from small reservoirs are off-the-radar and not well understood. Are there 7Q10 related release requirements for all reservoirs?
- No permits are required for withdrawals (groundwater and surface water) of less than 100,000 gallons per day. We might need to improve our tracking of these withdrawals.
- Smart meters (AMI) help to account for water loss. Many systems have them in the region. Consider including in the plan.
- Integrated asset management that seeks to maintain natural, as well as, built infrastructure and facilities is important to addressing flows issues.
- Conservation and efficiency in our neighboring regions (outside Metro Water District) are important for flows/supply issues at watershed scale.
- We should consider more reuse, including indirect potable reuse.

#### **Wastewater:**

- We should consider giving some credit for returns from septic systems.
- In planning, we shouldn't assume that septic systems are 100 percent consumptive.
- Concentration of waste is a concern with wastewater in dry periods. We could consider dilution with stormwater flows, if needed.
- We need to keep better track of septic haulers.
- Land application systems (LAS) and septic systems belong in the same bucket – They are not 100 percent consumptive, but they are supposed to be zero discharge. It varies over soil type, but how will it vary in dry vs. wet years?

- Would like to see in the integrated model the consideration of the impacts of LAS on stream base flow.
- Support production of biodiesel with grease through FROG (fats, rags, oils and grease) programs.

#### **Education and Public Awareness:**

- Most of our education programs focus on elementary school grades. We should provide more programming for middle/high school students.
- Funding for education programs needs to be part of the utility bill.
- Farm Bureau has an Ag in the Classroom program that can support our education programs.
- We need to emphasize the value of water in our education messages.
- Some utilities might need assistance or support in communicating with customers and stakeholders about rates.
- We need to better educate the judiciary about water resources.
- Local entities appreciate having incentives and a menu of options for compliance with requirements. This applies to other areas of the plan, too.

The discussion of the watershed plan review was deferred until later in the meeting, after the presentation of additional related slides.

#### **Water Demand Forecasting Process**

Brian Skeens (CH2M HILL) presented slides on the approach to forecasting water demands for the plan update. The forecasts will be presented to the District Board in June or August. The following is a summary of the BAC members' discussion about the water demand forecasts:

- We will be using the same process, methodology and model as were used in the last plan update.
- Rockdale is growth limited. Last time, our forecast was too high.
- Will the demands be broken down by watershed?
  - Yes, they will.
- Will you include new conservation practices that could be added to the plumbing code in the forecasts?
  - We can consider these practices as implementation actions and evaluate their impacts, but only those practices currently required will be incorporated into the forecasts.
- For the last plan update, there were concerns about the adjustments needed.
  - We have more actual data this time. We have data from enough normal years that we should have a good baseline.
- Will you consider economic cycle impacts on water demands?
  - These should be incorporated into the population forecasts that the water demands will be based on.

- The forecasting process needs to be transparent and defensible. The forecasts are the backbone of the plan. We were criticized for them in the last plan update.
- Declining demand trends have been seen elsewhere. What do you expect?
  - Hard to predict without all the data. We will have the data soon.

### **Watershed Management: River Basin Profiles and Review of Management Measures**

Chrissy Thom (CH2M HILL) presented slides on the approach to the watershed management plan update and on the basin profiles for the Flint and Ocmulgee watersheds. She said that in the 2016 plan update, the river basin profiles will be organized to support watershed management planning and to maximize relevance for local communities. Her slides reviewed the changes in conditions in the two watersheds since 2009 including land cover, land use and impaired waters. She also reviewed management issues in each river basin.

Next, Chrissy presented a review of the 2009 plan's implementation actions related to watershed management. She also reviewed implementation successes and opportunities for refinement and integration related to watershed management. Then, Kristin Rowles facilitated a discussion of the BAC members of the watershed management plan review and implementation actions. The following is a summary of the BAC members' discussion:

- Maintenance of private BMPs over time (including green infrastructure) is critically important to effective watershed management, and maintenance is currently a problem. We should learn more about how this is addressed elsewhere.
- The transition of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to the Department of Agriculture could affect regulations. ***BAC members requested a list of the appointees to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.***
- Communities are challenged to enforce their stormwater management ordinances and this can limit their effectiveness.
- Stormwater management seems to be more effective in some parts of the region than in others.
- We have different stormwater concerns in different areas of the District.
- We currently direct too many resources to checking boxes to comply with requirements, especially for MS4 permits.
- The documentation requirements are too burdensome and keep us from focusing on what really needs to be done for stormwater management. We should limit documentation required for District plan. Also, perhaps the District could help to facilitate discussions with EPD on documentation required for MS4 permits.
- Change of personnel over time in state agencies and local utilities and government agencies requires that we provide more training for new personnel.
- Funding has a direct relationship to enforcement. Funding for inspectors is limited.
- We need more consistency in enforcement practices across the District.
- Current state policy on land application systems in Upper Flint needs updating. The current EPD policy actually prohibits return flows. The District could help to update this policy.

- For withdrawal permits, we need to review low flow conditions to determine if they are protective enough.
- We need a better understanding of Upper Flint flows and geology to address current concerns with flows there. There are very low flows even in non-drought years.
- Urban agriculture has water use implications that should be considered and managed.

**Next Steps**

The next BAC meeting will be a joint meeting in late June. At the next meeting, BAC members will discuss water and wastewater implementation actions as well as other items related to the plan update. A BAC meeting in July is also possible if needed due to the schedule of the plan update process. Details will be sent to members soon.