

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch

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MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Planning Council Members

From: Linda MacGregor, Chief
Watershed Protection Branch 

Thru: Assistant Branch Chiefs

Date: September 21, 2010

RE: *EPD Guidance for evaluating management practices to manage water demand*

As you know, management practices to meet future water needs are an important element of regional water planning, and the essential first element of meeting future water needs will be practices that manage water demand. The State Water Plan (SWP) specifically highlights water conservation as a priority water management practice to be implemented to help meet water demand in all areas of the state.¹

More recently, adoption of the 2010 Water Stewardship Act underscored this emphasis.² The Water Stewardship Act is intended to create a culture of water conservation in the State of Georgia. Along with the State Water Plan, the Act includes provisions that you will need to consider as you review and select management practices to meet future water needs.

To assist you in this task, EPD has prepared this guidance on evaluating water demand management practices to determine which are most appropriate for your region. This guidance has three purposes:

- Establish a common starting point for all Water Planning Councils as they review and consider water demand management practices;
- Ensure that management practices reflect current rules and regulations as well as amendments to rules and regulations expected following the State Water Plan and the Water Stewardship Act; and
- Provide flexibility for you to adapt practices to the specifics of your region, including the mix of water users and the condition of your water resources.

The guidance establishes a tiered approach to evaluation of water conservation practices:

Tier 1: Basic water conservation activities and practices that are currently required by statute or will soon to be required in EPD's upcoming amended rules.

¹ SWP, Section 7, Policy 3 (p. 19)

² GA Water Stewardship Act of 2010, Senate Bill 370 - http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009_10/sum/sb370.htm

- Tier 2:* Basic water conservation activities and practices that will be addressed in upcoming amended rules but not required of all permit applicants.
- Tier 3:* Basic water conservation practices (for all water use sectors) that will not be addressed in current or upcoming amended rules.
- Tier 4:* "Beyond basic" water conservation practices to be considered if a gap exists between current or future water supplies and demands for the region.

Georgia's Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP), released in March 2010, is an information resource to inform your Council's discussion of demand management practices.³ Development of the Water Conservation Implementation Plan was led by DNR, with substantial input from water users across the state. It identifies water conservation goals, benchmarks, and best management practices for the state's diverse water users. Please draw on the information in the WCIP as you select demand management practices.

While the WCIP is a valuable resource, it is not an exhaustive collection of all possible water conservation practices. If Council members identify additional water conservation activities that may be appropriate for your region, those practices should also be considered.

EPD's guidance provides detailed tools to support you as you consider water conservation practices. Tools include worksheets that categorize the water conservation goals and practices found in the WCIP, the practices listed in the SWP and the activities discussed in the Water Stewardship Act of 2010. Again, the list of conservation-related activities is not exhaustive. It can and should be supplemented with additional practices as useful for your region.

This guidance will be used in selecting demand management practices appropriate for your region and therefore should be included in your recommended regional water plan. However, the guidance is not intended to prescribe the specific method used to evaluate water conservation practices. That method will be defined by your Council. The process, inputs, outputs and final results will be documented in a Technical Memorandum (TM) as a supplement to the regional water plan.

If you have questions, please contact Alice Miller Keyes at alice_keyes@dnr.state.ga.us or 912-262-3185.

³ A copy of the WCIP and a WCIP Synopsis are available online www.ConserveWaterGeorgia.net/documents/wcip.