

## Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council Public Involvement Plan

This document summarizes the Public Involvement Plan which will guide public involvement activities of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council (Council). This Plan establishes the public involvement activities that will be undertaken by the Council.

The Chair of the Council will use discretion in permitting additional public comment or adjusting to adapt to specific meeting timelines and constraints, so long as the intent and expectations described below are followed.

During the regional planning process the Council, with assistance from their regional planning contractors, will implement this Public Involvement Plan to provide opportunities for meaningful input from key stakeholders, the members of local government advisory body, and the general public.

### *Guiding principles*

The Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council recognizes the benefit and importance of providing opportunities for diverse input throughout the regional water planning process. The principles of the public input process are:

- Stakeholders and regional water planning council members will treat each other with respect and dignity;
- All participants will have an open mind and participate openly and honestly;
- The regional water planning process will continue with concurrent public comment throughout;
- EPD will provide public notice and take public comment on draft regional water plans after they are submitted;
- Stakeholder comments will be pertinent to the topic of the meeting at which they are expressed; and
- Input from the public, key stakeholders, and the members of the Local Government Advisory Body will be actively sought, directed to the Chairman, considered, and incorporated in regional water planning council work products.

### *Key stakeholders*

The key stakeholders for the Suwannee-Satilla water planning region are identified below. All members of the public will have opportunities for input, even if not specifically identified in this section.

## Public Involvement Plan

- Local Government officials – includes one representative from each city and county within the water planning region.
- Neighboring regional water planning councils – water planning councils that share borders and/or water resources.
- Regional Commissions – agencies supporting local and regional comprehensive planning.
- Agriculture – includes water permit holders for agricultural applications and all other agricultural interests.
- Businesses – includes local businesses (this audience may be sub-divided into more specific categories).
- Industries – includes industrial water permit holders, industrial discharge permit holders, and municipally-supplied industrial facilities.
- Forestry – includes owners of managed forest lands and the forest products industry, including water-use holders and discharge permit holders.
- Institutions/educational/schools – includes public and private schools as well as institutions.
- Tourism – includes public and private organizations related to local travel and tourism.
- Recreation – includes citizens and industry related to recreational water uses and recreational water-use industries.
- Environment – includes citizens, agencies, and groups focused on environmental restoration and protection.
- Public – any citizen interested in the regional water planning process.

***Procedural criteria***

Time will be provided at every regional water planning council meeting for input from stakeholders and the public. The procedural criteria are intended to ensure the public respects the regional water planning council's schedule constraints and the regional water planning council respects the public's opportunity to present relevant and different opinions. To facilitate a fair and efficient process, the Suwannee-Satilla water planning council has adopted the following procedures for public comment.

- All full regional water planning council meetings will be open meetings.
- Stakeholders will be provided an opportunity to provide comments pertinent to the topic of the meeting in which they are expressed.

- Time will be provided at the beginning and end of all Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council meetings for comments.
- Provisions for written comments will be made at all regional water planning council meetings.

The Chair of the regional water planning councils will use discretion to manage public comment under different circumstances in ways that enable the council to progress with its work and respect those who want to comment.

### ***Meeting announcements***

All regional water planning council meetings will be open meetings, including at least a 72-hour notice of any meetings. The following provisions will be made for all planning council meetings to inform the public of upcoming meetings.

- Posted on the Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council website with a meeting agenda or summary of topics to be covered, meeting time, and meeting address.
- Posted at the meeting location with a meeting agenda or summary of topics to be covered, meeting time, and meeting address.
- Meeting summaries will be posted on the Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council website and distributed to the following SE Georgia media-contact list:
  - Georgia Times Union: Mike Morrison [jmichaelmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:jmichaelmorrison@gmail.com); Terry Dickson [terry.dickson@jacksonville.com](mailto:terry.dickson@jacksonville.com)
  - Brunswick News: Hank Rowland [hrowland@thebrunswicknews.com](mailto:hrowland@thebrunswicknews.com); Kerry Klumpe [kklumpe@thebrunswicknews.com](mailto:kklumpe@thebrunswicknews.com)
  - Waycross Journal-Herald: Jack Williams [jack.williams@wjhnews.com](mailto:jack.williams@wjhnews.com)
  - Savannah News Press: Tom Barton [tom.barton@savannahnow.com](mailto:tom.barton@savannahnow.com)
  - Camden Tribune and Georgian: Jill Helton [editor1@tds.net](mailto:editor1@tds.net)
  - Jesup Press - Sentinel: Drew Davis [drewd01@bellsouth.net](mailto:drewd01@bellsouth.net)
  - The Douglas Enterprise: [newsdougent@windstream.net](mailto:newsdougent@windstream.net)
  - Charlton County Herald: Robert Williams, Jr. [cchgenmgr@windstream.net](mailto:cchgenmgr@windstream.net)
  - Atkinson County Citizen: [atcocitizen@planttel.net](mailto:atcocitizen@planttel.net)
  - The Tifton Gazette: Flo Rankin [flo.rankin@gafnews.com](mailto:flo.rankin@gafnews.com)

## Public Involvement Plan

- Brantley Express: Mittie Vaughn [pressexpress@bellsouth.net](mailto:pressexpress@bellsouth.net)
- Brantley Enterprise: Ken Buchanan [news@brantleyenterprise.com](mailto:news@brantleyenterprise.com)
- Valdosta Daily Times: Kay Harris [kay.harris@gafl.news](mailto:kay.harris@gafl.news)
- Alma Times: Carol Lee Wilson [mail@thealmatimes.com](mailto:mail@thealmatimes.com)
- The Herald-Leader: Sherri Butler [butlerherald@gmail.com](mailto:butlerherald@gmail.com)
- The Berrien Press: Donald Boyd [localnews@windstream.net](mailto:localnews@windstream.net)
- Quitman Free Press: [adelnews@alltel.net](mailto:adelnews@alltel.net)
- The Clinch County News: Len Robbins [clinnews@windstream.net](mailto:clinnews@windstream.net)
- The Adel News Tribune: [adelnews@windstream.net](mailto:adelnews@windstream.net)
- Ocilla Star: [ocillastar@windstream.net](mailto:ocillastar@windstream.net)
- Lanier County Newspaper: Charles Shiber [adelnewstribune@runbox.com](mailto:adelnewstribune@runbox.com)
- The Blackshear Times: Sandy Chancey [mail@theblacksheartimes.com](mailto:mail@theblacksheartimes.com)
- The Wiregrass Farmer: [wiregrassfarmer@yahoo.com](mailto:wiregrassfarmer@yahoo.com)

***Stakeholder and public comment opportunities***

Specific opportunities during the regional water planning process for stakeholder and public input include but are not limited to the following:

- Meetings of the Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council.
- Suwannee-Satilla regional water planning council website (documents will be posted periodically with timeframes for comment and mechanisms for comment clearly stated).
- Letters may be mailed to EPD with a copy to Rick Brown and Cliff Lewis.
- Emails to the regional water planning council Chairman and/or EPD.
- EPD public notice period for the resource assessments.
- EPD public notice period on the draft regional water plans.

***Local government officials***

Much of the implementation of the regional water plans is the responsibility of local governments; therefore input will be sought from the local government officials on the following specific topics.

- Regional population, economic and employment forecasts
- Fiscal implications of water management practices
- Draft regional water plan

The regional water planning council and local government officials should identify proper communication pathways. The following actions are intended to coordinate activities of the local government officials with the regional water planning councils.

- Local government officials are encouraged to attend the meetings and will be provided an opportunity at the beginning and end of the regional water planning council meetings to comment on the regional water planning process and items on the meeting agenda
- Local government officials may provide written comments to the regional water planning council, as needed.

### ***Other regional water planning councils***

In order to plan and coordinate the use and protection of shared water resources, the regional water planning council will coordinate with adjacent and hydrologically-connected councils throughout the regional water planning process. EPD will convene some meetings to discuss shared water resources, such as on the current resource assessments. The regional water planning councils will use the following communication pathways to coordinate with adjacent regional water planning councils.

- Members of the regional water planning council will attend shared resource meetings and other joint meetings
- At the discretion of the Chair, an opportunity may be provided at regional water planning council meetings for announcements or progress reports from adjacent regional water planning councils

The Chair of the regional water planning councils may use their discretion to provide additional coordination with adjacent regional water planning councils, as deemed appropriate.

### ***Review and consideration of public input***

The objective of this process is to gather relevant and diverse input to improve the quality of the recommended regional water plans. Once public comments are received from the public and key stakeholders the regional water planning council with the

[Georgia State-wide Water Management Plan](#)

Public Involvement Plan

assistance of the regional planning contractor will consider and address these comments. Written comments and web comments will be summarized and provided to the regional water planning council members. Verbal comments will be summarized and included in meeting summaries.