

Memorandum

To: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council

From: Rick Brown and Brian Keel

Date: 5/15/09

Subject: Council Meeting 1 Minutes

This memorandum summarizes the meeting minutes of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 1 on May 6, 2009.

1) Welcome and Introductions/Approve Agenda

Jackie Wilson, the Mayor of Douglas, GA, gave a welcome to all in attendance. The Suwannee-Satilla EPD Representative and Planning Contractors introduced themselves to the members of the Water Planning Council. Council members introduced themselves to EPD, the Planning Contractors, and each other. Public attendees introduced themselves to the group. The meeting Facilitator proposed some changes to the order of the Agenda and the Council approved them.

2) Kickoff Meeting Evaluation

The Facilitator presented the summary of results of the evaluation forms from the Kickoff Meeting. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Property rights ranked surprisingly low in the Water 35 exercise results. *Response: The goal of the exercise was not to assign hard priority rankings to various issues, but rather to serve as a negotiation and discussion exercise and to begin to gain insights into what is important to the Council members.*
- For those that were not at the Kickoff Meeting, will there be a recap today? *Response: Today's presentations will review some of the discussion from the Kickoff Meeting. If after today's meeting you feel like you are still missing some of the issues we can talk one-on-one or schedule a conference call to get you up to speed.*

3) Water Planning Process Presentation

The Facilitator presented an introduction to the Water Planning process. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- In the case of a pipeline passing through private property, where do the property owner's riparian rights end? *Response: The intent of the State Water Plan is to work within the existing legal framework and not change current laws but define how they affect you. The main goal today is to identify issues that property owners and other stakeholders are facing.*
- Is this State Water Planning process about the GA-AL-FL water war? *Response: Interstate complexity will come later in the planning process. We will have to work with South Carolina on saltwater intrusion in the Savannah/Upper Ogeechee Region. Both the Suwannee and Satilla Rivers flow from GA into FL.*
- EPD has shut down some water rights based on bad information. Some of GA's water is off limits today. Why? *Response: EPD is concerned about the tremendous growth and impacts on the resources of the state. EPD has worked with the available data they had to develop plans to address permit requests and GA's regional issues and best serve the population. EPD is currently conducting Resource Assessments that will tell us what surface water and ground water resources are available today and in the future. These Assessments will "connect the dots" through all of the State Regions. The goal is to have sound science guide decisions.*
- With all of the involved parties, who is looking after property rights? *Response: Existing laws. Again, it is not the intent of the water planning process to rewrite existing laws.*
- Will Councils make decisions on water allocations? *Response: Yes, in general terms. The Councils water development and conservation plans will be used as a significant guide for making resource management decisions. Planning Contractors will assist in the planning process and provide general recommendations but specifics will be left up to the Councils. You will have to develop different management strategies to meet compromises between competing interests.*
- Water will ultimately control our economy. What happens to people and the economy when we run out of water? These issues should be kept at the top of our discussions. *Response: Keep this thought for the Trends, Forces, and Factors discussion later today.*

- There are a lot of successful, action-oriented business people on this Council. Are they going to be listened to? *Response from other Council member: EPD is easy to work with, their people are working for the good of the state, and they will listen to the Councils. We are not wasting our time. It is the Council's responsibility to provide EPD with accurate information. Response from EPD: The Plan as developed by the Council will be used to make permitting and funding decisions. The Councils have a lot of work to do.*
- How will other studies be collected and integrated into the Plan? *Response: Other contractors are working to gather data and studies to characterize ground water, surface water, and water quality. They are developing models to characterize existing and future conditions and determine how management decisions affect quantity and quality. UGA Tifton is also helping with agricultural forecasting.*
- Will the meeting material be mailed out to Council members? *Response: Everything we do will be available on the website and correspondence will occur via e-mails.*
- In the work on surface water and ground water supply, is there ongoing research or model response? *Response: The Resource Assessments will be presented at a later date. They are not yet complete.*
- Is it possible that the Council could work for months developing a Plan and it not be adopted by EPD? *Response: It is possible, but intermittent reviews and feedback from EPD make it unlikely.*

4) MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings Presentation

EPD made a presentation on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

5) Operating Procedures/Rules for Meetings Broad Issue Areas Exercise

The Council members engaged in an interactive review of the operating procedures/rules for meetings. The exercise involved breaking into 6 workgroups with each work group reviewing and offering their perspective on specific sections of the documents. An overview of each groups work is provided below.

- Work Group 1 advised that under Operating Procedures Section IV. Council Leadership, Number and Qualifications, the term of the Council Chair and Vice Chair be changed from 6 months to 12 months.

- Work Group 1 proposed the following revisions to Operating Procedures Section V. Decision Making:
 - Remove the last sentence in the Decision-Making paragraph. Replace with a statement to allow for a motion to originate with any Council member, require a second from another Council member, and then initiate a vote.
 - Revise the role of Alternates to be that of an alternate juror; they attend meetings so that they are up to speed on all of the issues but they do not vote unless a voting Council member is not present at a meeting. If one Alternate votes, all of them vote. If a Council member resigns or is excused, their position will be filled by an alternate. The Council would like to be able to vote on which alternate fills that position. *During the discussion it was identified that the Council needs a clarification from EPD as to the authority of the Councils to replace members versus the original appointing authority (Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker).*
 - If a Council member brings a motion but there is not enough information for people to vote on it, the vote can be postponed until sufficient information is available to the Council.
 - The Council may at any time bring a motion to reverse a previous Council decision and re-vote on an issue.
- Work Group 2 proposed the following revisions to Operating Procedures Section VI. Meetings and Governance:
 - In the Regular Meetings paragraph, it would be preferable to specify a day of the month for regular meetings to be held, such as the first Wednesday of the month.
 - In the Meeting Summaries paragraph, specify that meeting summaries shall be distributed to the Council at least two weeks prior to the next Council meeting.
- Work Group 3 offered the following comments pertaining to Operating Procedures Section VI. Meetings and Governance:
 - The language of the Presumption of Assent paragraph is acceptable.

- The language of the Participation by Non-Members paragraph is acceptable.
- Work Group 4 proposed the following revisions to Rules for Meetings:
 - Add language to Rule 4, Paragraph C to specify that if any Council member thinks a meeting agenda should be changed, that member should recommend the change to the Chairman prior to the meeting and the Chairman should respond prior to the meeting.
 - Add language to Rule 7, Paragraph A to specify in the public meeting notices that there will be opportunity for the public to speak in the meeting and the notices will specify the time period for public comment. Also request in the notices that any member of the public wishing to speak at an upcoming meeting inform the Council Chair in writing prior to the meeting.
 - Add language to Rule 7, Paragraph B to specify that the Council Chair has the responsibility to control the time allowed for public comment during meetings.
- Work Group 5 posed the question regarding Rules for Meetings Rule 6, Paragraph I of whether or not a written ballot is legal in the Regional Water Councils. *It was requested that EPD provide additional information as to how this provision be interpreted.* They proposed that all votes be made by a show of hands if written ballots are not legal in this setting.

6) Regional Geography, Facilities, and Resources Overview Presentation

The Facilitator presented an overview of Regional Geography, Facilities, and Resources for the Suwannee-Satilla Region. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Both the Suwannee and the Satilla Rivers flow from GA into FL. We will have to deal with interstate water issues on this Council. *Response: Yes, the Plan will have to broadly consider water resource issues and needs.*
- On the Wildlife Resources Regional Issues slide, what are “High Priority Streams”? *Response: I believe these are streams on the State’s 305(b) list, which means they are monitored for several water quality constituents. Any monitored stream that*

*exceeds the threshold for one or more constituents gets placed on the 303(d) list of Impaired Waters. The State develops Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for each of these waters. **It was requested that the number of streams (10) be double checked.***

7) Website Capabilities Presentation

The Facilitator presented the capabilities of the State Water Planning website with a live internet demonstration. There were no comments or questions from the Council.

8) Consensus Building Exercise

Council members completed the Consensus Building Exercise without questions or comments.

9) Population and Employment Forecasting Presentation

The Facilitator presented an introduction to population and employment forecasting. The following questions/comments from Council were addressed:

- Do the population and employment graphs indicate that half of the population does not work? *Response: The total populations shown on these graphs include people not of working age, including children, students, and retired people.*
- Can the Metro North Region keep growing so fast? *Response: There are many factors that will influence the future of growth in this Region. The City has become a central technological and economic hub and these factors will continue to drive growth.*
- How long can you sustain that growth without having to import natural resources? *Response: We will discuss this in the Trends, Forces, and Factors exercise.*
- If information is currently being collected by the Assessments, will the data be given to the Councils with enough time for members to review and verify the numbers? *Response: Yes, possibly not as much time as some members would like, but our goal is to foster an interactive approach. Bill Davis has been brought onto the team to help with this. In reviewing the data, Council members need to consider whether or not their disagreement fundamentally changes decisions that they will make.*

10) Trends, Forces, and Factors Exercise

The Facilitator broke the Council into two groups and explained the Trends, Forces, and Factors Exercise. Each Council member wrote down what he or she thought were the 5

most important factors affecting water in their region. The two groups posted their ideas on opposite walls and sorted them into groups. With help from the Facilitator, a representative from each group developed a statement that encompassed each group of ideas.

Group 1 results were as follows:

- Healthy forests are important to maintain water quality and develop/sustain the economic base in the basin.
- Continued improvement in technology in measuring water use and quality is important for managing surface water and ground water resources.
- Managing resources to protect native species is important (reduce invasive species).
- Efficient water use for power and domestic purposes is important for long-term sustainability.
- Growth and population increases have impacted resources. Ensuring wise growth that protects resources is important.
- Abundance of ground water resources in basin provides availability for industrial growth in the basin as long as it's done in a responsible way.
- Forestry and agriculture are important to economy.
- Efficient use and management of ground water important to ensure an ample supply for generations.
- More farmers are moving from surface water to ground water a source of supply.

Group 2 results were as follows:

- Need to have more /adequate information on water use, need to cooperate and share data on water use to be able to effectively manage water resources.
- Retention of stormwater via land management practices can keep surface water in the region available for use.
- Property rights are important.

- How do you sell property to developers with water use restrictions? How do you effectively manage economic development with restricted water sources?
- How can we manage surface and ground water in a way that sustains surface water resources?
- Treated wastewater could provide agricultural irrigation water.
- Local decisions on water usage are important so that problem doesn't go into the hands of Federal government.
- Water transfers out of basin could impact future sustainability of basin.

11) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Members of the Council elected Darvin Eason as Chair and Grady Thompson as Vice Chair.

12) Local Elected Official Comments

Mayor Wilson extended thanks to the Council for holding the meeting in Douglas.

13) Public Comments

Elvin Andrews of the UGA Lanier County Extension offered their services in any way they can be of help.

14) Wrap-up and Next Meeting

Council agreed to hold next meeting in Douglas either the week of June 15th or the week of June 22nd.

15) Meeting Evaluations

The Facilitator distributed meeting evaluation forms and all members of Council filled one out. The Facilitator collected the forms. This marked the end of Council Meeting 1.