

To: Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Council

From: Jim Hawkins and Steve Simpson, Black & Veatch

cc: Tim Cash, Assistant Branch Chief, GA EPD

Subject: Meeting Summary: Council Meeting 2 on June 24, 2009

The council meeting was held on June 24, 2009 at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center in Columbus, Georgia. The list of attendees is attached. In addition to these minutes, all the presentations (slides) discussed in this meeting will be posted on the Statewide Water Planning web portal (<http://www.georgiawaterplanning.org>).

Welcome and Introductions / Recap Council Meeting 1/Approve Agenda/EPD Process Overview

Council Chair Matt Windom stated that a quorum was present and the meeting should begin. Matt thanked all members for attending. Council member Paul Chappell gave an invocation.

Steve Davis then welcomed the members to Columbus. Jim Hawkins asked members that were not present at Council Meeting 1 (CM 1) to introduce themselves; Phillip Eidson and Larry Clark each made a brief introduction. Other attendees of the meeting were asked to introduce themselves.

Jim reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Next, Jim reviewed the goals for today's meeting:

1. Review and approve (if possible) the MOA
2. Review population and employment forecasts
3. Introduce resource assessments -- their purpose and approach
4. Continue to create a regional vision

Jim stated that a draft meeting summary was prepared and forwarded to the council and that these were posted on the website. Matt asked if any members had any comments or edits to the Council Meeting 1 meeting summary. There were no comments, and the meeting summary was accepted by consensus.

Next, Tim Cash provided an overview of the planning process and its various components. His presentation focused on how the Council will use the resource assessments and forecasts to

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develop a water development and conservation plan. The slides for his presentation are available on the Council website with the Council Meeting 2 (CM2) materials.

Tim's presentation reviewed with the group that:

- Resource Assessments are being conducted by EPD, and they will establish the amount of water and assimilative capacity that is available to the region.
- Forecasts being prepared by EPD and its partners will estimate the region's future water needs.
- The Regional Water Councils will use the resource assessments and forecasts to identify unmet future needs.
- The Regional Water Councils will identify management practices that could be used to expand the capabilities of and/or reduce demand on their water resources.
- The Regional Water Councils will recommend Regional Plans to EPD that includes those management practices.
- EPD permit decisions will be guided by the Regional Plans.

After the presentation, Tim asked if Council Members had any questions. The following questions were asked:

- Larry Clark asked if the assessment information will be used throughout the State of Georgia, including Atlanta. *Tim said these assessments are for the whole state and that the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is also included as part of the statewide resource assessments. There will be joint meetings with other councils throughout the planning process.*
- Alan Bell asked what were some of the measures available to increase assimilative capacity. *Steve Simpson provided an example of a power plant changing how it cools its cooling water to reduce heat load into a receiving stream as an example. Tim stated that in some cases modifying developments from septic tanks to centralized wastewater systems can also increase the assimilative capacity of a stream by maximizing flow returns to streams.*
- Aaron McWhorter questioned how the state determines acceptable assimilative capacity. *Tim said that statewide water quality standard, used in conjunction with the application of stream-specific water quality models, determine assimilative capacity.*
- Aaron McWhorter then asked how the State of Georgia arrives at the water standards. *Tim said that while the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with the overall administration of the Clean Water Act, authority for permitting compliance, enforcement, and development of standards has been delegated to the State of Georgia.*

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- Ken Penuel asked if assimilative capacity has been determined for the entire state. *Tim responded that this is what the state is working on now as part of the resource assessments, but basically Georgia does this analysis each time EPD issues a permit for a wastewater treatment plant discharge as an example. In many cases, EPD uses wasteload allocation models to determine to what degree the wastewater needs to be treated to meet instream state water quality standards.*
 - Steve Davis asked how does TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) tie into the resource assessments that Georgia is currently working on. *Tim said that the TMDL process may become part of a suite of management practices that could be available for Council Members to review as a part of their management practice selection process.*
 - Jeff Lukken asked how EPD will decide availability of water resources with Atlanta upstream of them. *Tim said that the resource assessments will identify available water resources at planning nodes within the basin. Tim said no one council can dictate to the other the water resources that will be available to it to meet its future needs. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District water plans were adopted in 2003 and were recently updated in May. There will be an opportunity for all the Councils that share boundaries with Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to interact with the planning district.*
 - Ken Penuel asked how groundwater levels were determined. *Tim advised that the groundwater availability assessment is using modeling to determine sustainable flows from aquifers.*
 - Bill Heath asked if the approved plan dictates environmental and economic progress and if the plan is amended. *Tim said the planning process is designed to support economic and environmental progress and will be updated in the future.*
 - A Council Member asked if it was the intent of EPD to regulate the economic progress. *Tim said it was not the intent for EPD to regulate economic progress, but instead provide resources so the Council can determine how the region can support growth based on resource constraints.*
 - Gardiner Garrard asked if Georgia was going to redo all the discharge permits. *Tim said no. The plan will serve as guide for EPD in permitting after the plan is adopted.*
 - Steve Davis asked about the basis for the minimum flow of 750 cfs at Atlanta. *Tim advised that the 750 cfs was a USACOE operational guideline that supported both assimilative capacity needs and water withdrawal needs in the metro region.*

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- Alan Bell asked about transportation needs and how these related to lake/flow authorization. *Tim advised that one of the authorized uses of specific reservoirs was navigation.*

Population and Employment Forecast

For the discussion of the population and employment forecasts, David Tanner (Governor's Office of Planning & Budget (OPB)), Dr. Warren Brown (Carl Vinson Institute Government Applied Demography Program), Dr. Jeffrey Dorfman (UGA Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics) joined the meeting by telephone. Dr. Brown and Dr. Dorfman led the development of the population and employment forecasts.

Hand-outs of county level data on population and employment projections were given to the Council Members.

Warren and Jeff introduced themselves and provided an overview of the population and employment forecasting work. Warren emphasized the need for input and feedback. Jeff pointed out that employment forecasts were done via statistical modeling based on data from 1990 on for 54 different industries. Jim Hawkins asked Warren and Jeff to elaborate on the population and employment balance. Warren and Jeff addressed this by discussing the alternative projection scenarios that were considered.

Jim asked Council Members for questions from members.

- Walt Rosso pointed out that Fort Benning will soon be served with water from Columbus.
- Robert Watkins noted that he had read that 17,000 soldiers at Fort Benning will mean 30,000 more people to the area and that this water will needed to be provided by Columbus. *Jeff stated this is larger than they estimated and they do not have this amount of increase reflected in the workforce projections. Warren stated that input like this will be researched to confirm, so knowing the source of this info will speed up the process. Harry Lange said that some extensive reports on a county by county level are available which provide more details about the base expansion impacts; these could likely be obtained from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. Steve Davis said Columbus Water Works is building 80 million dollars worth of infrastructure to meet the base expansion needs. It was also noted that transient soldier population (aka soldiers coming to the base for training) could be as high as 120,000 per year. Warren advised that transient population is not included in the projections and will need to be accommodated by water supply forecasting.*
- Ken Penuel noted that for the Council's region, population and population growth are concentrated in three counties (Muscogee, Troup, and Carroll).

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- Harry Lange said they have submitted updated Harris county population numbers which included the Kia plant and other new development impacts, such as planned residential growth in Callaway Gardens, etc. He noted that they did four separate population estimates and chose the middle estimate which was higher than what Georgia estimated.
- Jeff Lukken asked are we going to cover each County today. *Jim said no, but wanted to remind folk about the deadline to submit the information was June 30. Steve Simpson advised this should be done online at www.georgiawaterplanning.org.*
- Robert Watkins mentioned that Opelika recently increased their permitted water withdrawal from the Chattahoochee basin from 18 mgd to 42 mgd. He said we can't do this process without looking at Alabama, as withdrawals for Phenix City, Auburn, etc will affect Chattahoochee River water availability. *Warren said this was a good question as the new Kia plant and Fort Benning expansions will affect Alabama as well, and it is very difficult to project how these affect Georgia population versus Alabama population; he noted the best approach would be for the states to work together and share data.*
- Matt Windom asked how "conservative the population estimates are; and questioned whether this provides enough buffer for water planning growth. *Warren advised that water planning could be based on higher needs.*
- Aaron McWhorter asked what is the safety margin with the workforce projections. *Jeff said the error is different based on the year of projection. For example, a projection of 10 years would have a smaller error range than that a 40 year projection. They thought the workforce error range was in the range of 5% -6%, but cautioned this was draft.*
- Ken Penuel noted the projections looked different throughout the horizon. The first 15 years look good, the second 15 years look moderate, and the last ten years looks like a 5% increase. *Warren advised that the original projections that were started went to 2040; the dip at 2040 is due to the methodology for extending these long range projections. Warren cautioned the council not to look at small changes in the forecast, but look at the rate of change between 2010 and 2050; the finalized projections will likely not include the apparent dip at 2040 in the draft projections.*
- Jeff Lukken said the Troup County projection is off for the next ten years. LaGrange was set to double and the County is growing even faster, particularly with the Kia and Fort Benning impacts in the next 5-10 years. He said they have data to show 11,500 home permits are approved in LaGrange. *Warren said we need to capture these comments in the formal feedback process. Warren said they will consider every comment. He noted that this Fall, they will be doing workshops around the state to explain these estimates and to gather input for the 2012 update of population and employment. Warren advised*

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that the dates have not yet been set, but they are coordinating with the RDCs and will likely be in October. Jim said we will get these dates to the Council Members when they are established.

- Ken Penuel commented that he would like to have data emailed as an Excel file in lieu of a pdf file.

The schedule for population and employment forecasting was discussed. The deadline for input is June 30, comments will be compiled and submitted to the Carl Vinson Institute of Government by July 20, and the population and employment projections will be finalized by the end of August, with release of the finalized numbers around September 1. The projections are scheduled to be updated every two years, with the first update in 2012, using the 2010 census results. David Tanner expressed his appreciation for the input and feedback from council members and the Local Government Advisory Body.

Jim noted he will forward population and employment comments that he receives to Council Members.

MOA, Operating Procedures, and Rules for Meetings

Next, Jim referred the Council to the documents that had been sent with feedback from GA EPD on changes to the MOA and related documents suggested by the Council at CM1. Hand-outs of the documents were passed out. Tim Cash (GA EPD) introduced the GA EPD/DCA responses to the Council's requested changes. He noted that GA EPD/DCA reviewed the comments and suggestions made by all ten regional water councils.

The Council Members had the following questions or comments:

- A Council Member asked if any other Councils had signed the MOA yet. Another Council Member mentioned that Coosa North Georgia Water Planning Council had signed their MOA.
- Harry Lange is concerned that EPD and DCA did not want to consider the changing language in the MOA that said "shall follow guidance provided by EPD" to "shall consider guidance provided by EPD." Harry said this change was crucial for him. Matt thought this was a key point and wanted comments from other Council Members today.
- Aaron McWhorter said it was clear to him that we are an advisory body and EPD has final authority.

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- Jeff Lukken thought that we needed to develop our plan to ensure objections were not silent and could be written into the plan. EPD will eventually approve the WDCP, but the development of the plan should note dissent where it occurs.
 - Larry Clark advised that he did not agree with the involvement of DCA in the MOA. Larry also expressed concern about the Middle and Lower Chattahoochee jurisdictions being treated fairly.
 - Jeff Lukken asked what was the Lower Flint Water Planning Council's main objection to the MOA. *Steve said the only issue involved media communications. For this issue, they had decided to assign a subcommittee to further discuss the communication guidelines.*
 - Jeff Lukken said he did not have a problem as long as objections could be noted during the process. *Tim stated there was ample opportunity to offer objections during the process, and that the likelihood of the Council recommending a plan to EPD that could not be approved should be low since the MOA requires that the Council share early drafts of the plan with EPD for review and comment. On the issue with the guidance, he recognized it is difficult for the Council to visualize how the plan is supposed to look since the Council Members have not seen the planning guidance or the Resource Assessments. The population and employment projections are part of the guidance; as with these elements, the Council will have opportunity for input.*
 - Aaron McWhorter said this MOA was simply the rules we play by.
 - Ken Penuel asked about why we have to sign the MOA early. *Tim said technically, the Council cannot begin the planning without it.*

Next, Jim reviewed the changes. The "Desired Changes in MOA Companion Documents" file was the guide for this discussion. The members also referred to "redline" versions of the Operating Procedures and Rules for Meetings that had proposed changes marked.

In "Desired Changes in MOA Companion Documents", GA EPD listed changes suggested by the Council. Changes accepted by GA EPD were noted by a lack of highlighting and comment, and have been incorporated in the "red-line" version of the Operating Procedures and Rules for Meetings. Generally, these changes that were accepted by GA EPD did not require discussion, and Jim just noted these. Where GA EPD did not accept the Council's proposed change, the change was highlighted and usually, alternative language was suggested by GA EPD.

Discussion focused on these items, and this discussion is summarized below.

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- Senator Bill Health noted that a quorum was defined as 67% which equaled 15 members and a two-thirds quorum equaled 14 members. There were no additional comments on this issue.
 - Alan Bell had a question concerning about the number of Council Members needed for a subcommittee. He was concerned about sending an unequal representation in number to other regional council's subcommittee meetings. Steve commented that the language in the documents explicitly states the Chair's authority to appoint subcommittees. The Chair and Vice-Chair will represent the Council for the first joint council meeting, which will be the same for all councils. Jim suggested that the Council could add language to include equal representation compared to other councils.
 - Matt Windom asked if the council members had consensus. Harry Lange said he would not have a problem as long as our water development and conservation plan remains intact. Matt noted any objections would be included in the meeting summaries. Harry Lange made a motion to accept with additional language regarding subcommittee strength, seconded by Aaron McWhorter.
 - Ken Penuel made a motion that the motion on the floor be amended to include the statement that the Chair be the spokesman to the media on behalf of the Council. Jimmy Knight seconded this motion.
 - After some discussion regarding the wording and what to include in the resolution, the following motion was made:

The Middle Chattahoochee Water Planning Council accepts the MOA provided that the Subcommittee paragraph in the Operating Procedures can be changed to ensure Council has equal representation with other subcommittees from other Councils and the water development and conservation plan includes a dissenting opinion document to ensure dissenting options are documented. Also, the Chair will be the spokesman to the media on behalf of the Council.

- Tim noted that EPD and DCA will need to accept the proposed changes to the MOA and associated documents before the MOA can be signed.

Council Chair Matt Windom called for a vote for the resolution. **The motion passed: 17 votes in favor, 0 opposed, with 2 abstentions.**

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Introduction to Agriculture Water Demand Forecasts

Mark Masters from the Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center provided an introduction to the agricultural water demand forecasts, which will be presented at CM3. His slides will be available on the council website with materials from CM2.

Mark's presentation included an overview of crops, associated water usage, irrigated amounts, types of irrigation equipment, seasonal patterns of irrigation, changes over time, and trends. Of note for the Middle Chattahoochee Council is the fact that approximately 45,000 acres in the Council are irrigated, with approximately 62,000 acres permitted for irrigation.

The Council Members had the following questions:

- Alan Bell asked about what the red line dividing the state in the middle on the groundwater map represented. Mark advised that this represented the fall line, which is a delineation between the higher producing groundwater resources in the south from the lower producing groundwater resources in the piedmont north of this line.
- Jeff Lukken asked how much agricultural water gets returned. Mark said Georgia considers agricultural water 100% consumptive. However, in cases where agricultural irrigation keeps the surface soil layer saturated, when rainfall occurs, some studies suggest that this may provide a more rapid aquifer replenishment compared to non-irrigated land. Mark mentioned that Florida assumes agricultural water is 70% consumptive.
- Aaron McWhorter mentioned the recent USGS septic system study that documents septic tank contributions to surface water flows in the Piedmont, which supports the viewpoint that septic tank disposal is not truly totally consumptive.
- A Council Member asked if you can sell your permit limits. Mark said no, that unlike western water law, the permits belonged to the land.
- Ken Penuel asked what percentages of the farmers that use groundwater are metered. Mark estimated that it was about 60% in Flint River Basin.
- Steve Davis asked Mark how much he has seen the aquifer water level drop. Mark said a water well in Dougherty County in the 1999 -2003 drought dropped 45 feet and in six weeks it was completely replenished.
- Ken Penuel asked what water-saving technologies are coming to the agriculture. Mark said continued use of lower pressure systems for center pivot irrigation, implementation of variable rate irrigation, and conservation tillage would be important.

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Mark pointed out one of the keys in certain areas of southwest Georgia is the linkage between surface and groundwater. In key areas where there is a high degree of connectivity between streams and groundwater, under specific conditions, of a total groundwater withdrawal of 100 gallons, streamflows may be reduced by as much as 28 gallons.

Steve Simpson mentioned that the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Service put together a presentation on the status of the agricultural metering program in Georgia, and that this presentation is available on the website under the Lower Flint Council documentation.

Introduction to Resource Assessments

Steve Simpson reviewed an introduction to modeling, types of models, and the use of modeling for the resource assessments pertaining to the statewide water planning effort. He provided an introduction to the development of the resource assessments, which will serve as the basis for determining the status and capacity of the region's water resources.

The slides from the modeling and introductory resource assessment presentation will be available on the council website with materials from CM2.

The Council Members had the following questions:

- Jeff Lukken asked who was doing the surface water quality modeling. *Tim stated that this work was being performed by TetraTech.*
- Robert Watkins said the graphics used were very misleading for the power users. *Steve agreed and reminded everyone that the graphs summarized water withdrawals and not consumptive use. Much of the information developed to date is on a withdrawal basis as the consumptive use of water by various sectors is not specifically known. Steve noted that of the various water-using industries, the consumptive use of power plants is among the best documented, as the withdrawals and discharges are both metered.*
- Paul Chappell asked if the State has some history of calculating assimilative capacity. *Steve said that for every discharge permit EPD writes, there is some level of investigation of assimilative capacity, depending on the particular discharge. In many cases, there is a site specific analysis of the flow and concentration that is modeled to ensure there is not an unacceptable impact. The surface water quality assessment will be incorporating previous assimilative capacity information in an overall assessment.*

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- Steve noted that these are good questions. Modeling is about making assumptions based on scientific assumptions. Steve noted that this does not mean we can't challenge the assumptions. We need to learn about the models and their sensitivities.

Creating a Regional Vision

Jim presented slides to describe the development of a regional vision to guide the Council in the development of the regional water plan. These slides are included on the council's website with materials for CM2. Jim referred to the vision for the statewide water plan. Jim said Georgia manages water resources in a sustainable manner to:

1. Support the state's economy
2. Protect public health and natural systems
3. Enhance the quality of life for all citizens

Jim said that the Council's vision would describe how the statewide vision applies in this region. The vision would help in the development of goals for the regional water plan and in the selection of management practices, in combination with the resource assessments and water use demand forecasts.

Jim said that at the next meeting, we would work to develop a shared vision for the Council, and that before that, the Council members would need to think about their individual ideas for the vision. Jim passed out two hand-outs that described a "homework" assignment to prepare for the vision discussion at the next council meeting. Overall, the hand-out asks Council members to list their ideas in response to the following question: *What do you want your rivers, lakes and groundwater to do for you and the citizens in your planning region?*

Jim reminded the members about the discussion of Trends, Forces, and Factors at CM1. Jim briefly reviewed the trends, forces, and factors identified for the region's water resources by the group at CM1 which was included in a handout. These items might be helpful as they consider their responses to the above over-arching question.

Jeff Lukken asked if this was an internet exercise. Jim said no, that the intent was to work on this prior to Council Meeting 3. If Council Members had any questions, Jim encouraged them to e-mail him.

Public Involvement Plan

Jim said that EPD will soon issue a public involvement plan template for finalization by the regional water planning councils.

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The public involvement plan will outline the opportunities for stakeholder participation from the local government advisory body, other regional water planning councils, and the public during the regional water planning process. Public involvement will be provided for at each of the Council's meetings (minimum quarterly) through comment periods for local government officials and the public at each meeting.

Public involvement will also include interacting with neighboring councils with which this region shares water resources. This will occur in part through joint council meetings. In the event of conflict between regional water planning councils, we will follow dispute resolution procedures outlined in the technical planning guidance to be provided by EPD. After EPD issues a draft public involvement plan template, the regional councils will finalize and implement it.

The future council schedule was discussed in broad terms; September will be the next quarterly meeting, followed by a joint council planning meeting in October to be attended by all council chair/vice chairs, followed by a quarterly meeting in November, and joint meetings in January 2010.

A Council Member asked about where the Metro North Georgia documents were located. Jim said he would e-mail a link so Council Members could refer to these documents. Jim said he may include other documents, such as the Flint River Basin Plan, so that the Council members would have a summer reading list.

Local Elected Officials and Public Comments

Next, the Council provided time for local elected officials and the general public an opportunity to address the council. There were no elected officials who spoke. Two public commenters spoke.

Buster Haddock, Randolph County Extension Agent, addressed the Council. He advised that he appreciates the opportunity to participate and said he has been assigned to this board and offered the services of UGA to the Council. Jeff Lukken asked what services he could provide. Buster said he could assist with providing irrigation data, reviewing data, organizing an agricultural onsite tour, providing university specialists, providing research data from the Irrigation Research Park in Camilla, etc.

Ted Will with GA DNR Fisheries advised that Fisheries Management staff will participate in each meeting. Ted advised that their staff is happy to help and assist the Council; they have expertise and knowledge in how instream flows and quality affect fish.

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Wrap-Up and What to Expect Next Meeting

The Council selected September 16 for its next meeting, which will be held at Callaway Gardens, Columbus, or LaGrange (location will be confirmed at a later date). The Council selected November 11 for Council Meeting 4. Meeting locations at the USACOE office in Clay County was suggested, and the USACOE office in West Point were suggested; the location will be confirmed at a later date.

Jim reviewed a list of items that would be on the CM3 agenda:

- Visioning
- Resource Assessments
- Joint Meetings
- Public Involvement Plan
- MOA Execution
- Regulatory Process Primer
- Regional Geography (319 and TMDL examples for region)
- Agricultural Water Use Forecasts
- Municipal and Industrial Forecasting Methodology
- Management Practices Overview

Aaron suggested we need to get some Alabama players involved. The Council Members discussed getting some names prior to Council Meeting 3. Steve Davis offered to put together a list of Alabama interested parties for Council consideration.

Ken Penuel outlined the broadband service project he is currently working on.

Council Meeting 2 Evaluation

At the conclusion of the council meeting, the members completed evaluation forms on the meeting, including one evaluation for the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and an additional evaluation for GA EPD. Matt Windom then adjourned the meeting.

Action List

- Jim will email a link so Council Members can refer to the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District documents. Jim said he may include other documents such as the Flint River Basin Plan so that the Council members would have a summer reading list.
- Jim noted he will send the population and employment comments that he received to Council Members.

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- Council Members are requested to think about their individual ideas for the Council's vision and work on a "homework" assignment handed out at the meeting prior to Council Meeting 3.

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Attachment 1:

**Middle Chattahoochee Planning Council
Council Meeting 2 Attendance – June 24, 2009**

Council Members

Alan Bell	Harry Lange
Jimmy Bradley	Jeff Lukken
Paul W. Chappell	Aaron McWhorter
Larry Clark	Gordon Moss
Steven R. Davis	Ken Penuel
Larry F. Dillard	Denney Rogers
Phillip Eidson	Walt Rosso
Tony A. Ellis	Jimmy Thompson (Alternate)
Gardiner W. Garrard	Robert Watkins
Gerald Greene (Ex-Officio)	Don A. Watson (Alternate)
Bill C. Gregory (Alternate)	Matt Windom
Bill Heath (Ex-Officio)	James R. Woods
Jimmy Knight	Robbie York

Council Members Not In Attendance

Jeffrey Brown
Joe B. Griffith
Randy Simpkins
Brad Yates

Georgia EPD

Tim Cash, Assistant Branch Chief
Bill Morris
Mork Winn

Georgia DCA

Joe Krewer

Planning Consultants

Jim Hawkins, B&V
Robert Osborne, B&V
Steve Simpson, B&V
Mark Masters, GWPPC
Nils Thompson, LBG