



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
Chattahoochee Basin Advisory Council
MEETING SUMMARY
January 15, 2008**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Chattahoochee Basin Advisory Council met on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cobb County Vinings Branch Public Library in Atlanta, GA.

Members Present

Alexandra Adams
Babafemi Adesanya
Kirsten Berry
Dave Breaden
Bob Bunker
David Chastant
Dieter Franz
Peter Frost
Doug Fulle
Kristina Garcia
Bill Higgins
Jo Jones
Michael Klahr
John Lawrence

Brice Martin
George Martin
Becky Mixon
Kathy Nguyen
Susan Rutherford
Barbara Seal
George Taylor
Julie Todd
Shana Udvardy
Franklin Wagner
Andrew Wells
Steve Williams

Welcome and Introductions

Joy Hinkle of the Metro Water District staff welcomed the Council and initiated introductions. Members introduced themselves with name, organization and favorite water activity or resource within the Chattahoochee basin. Interests included: National Park at I-285 & I-75, own backyard in Douglasville, Florence Marina, Sweetwater Creek Park, Peachtree Creek, East Jones Bridge Park, Riverside Drive Park in Roswell, shooting the Hooch in Helen, Chattahoochee in Columbus, headwaters, below the dam for fishing, Lake Lanier, trout fishing at Holcomb Bridge and GA400, Utoy Creek Nature Preserve, Powers Ferry and Northside Drive, Nancy Creek, all of the National Park and trails, paddling down Camp Creek, tributary creek in front yard.

Basin Profile Overview

Kim Shorter of Metcalf & Eddy presented the draft Chattahoochee basin profile, which covered the following:

- 50% increase in population (almost 1 million in total population increase)
- 1,823 square miles
- Land Use will include revised future land use (2035)
- Large increase in medium density residential
- Fecal Coliform listings likely from septic, agricultural sources, and sanitary sewer outfalls depending on location in the basin
- Discussion that biota listings are likely to increase as more monitoring is conducted – this is a District-wide trend
- Water withdrawals (not yet in the report to TCC for QA/QC)
- Wastewater treatment (draft not yet reported to TCC for QA/QC)
- Successes: City of Atlanta Clean Water Act, Georgia Power Heat Reduction, Metropolitan River Protection Act, Regional River Cleanups
- Challenges: fecal coliform bacteria, responsible new development, Lake Lanier water levels

Open Discussion

Kim Shorter facilitated discussion on successes and challenges in the Chattahoochee Basin that could be added to the draft basin profile. Council members provided the following feedback:

General

- Sediment from new development should be listed as a challenge in the basin profile – efforts have improved but there are still problems.
- There are concerns that as the Lake Lanier water level continues to lower, that the sediment and pollution issues associated are not being studied.
- There are not any public water withdrawals from the Chattahoochee River between the City of Atlanta water intake and Troup County.
- Someone should be monitoring sites which withdraw less than 100,000 gallons per month. Those are not currently regulated by EPD to the same level.
- Document the report which lists the Chattahoochee as an endangered river.
- Document that MNGWPD has an abundance of aquatic diversity and why that is important.

Successes

- The Georgia Power Heat Reduction Program was completed on January 5, 2008. The program now requires more water to be used in the cooling process.
- Georgia Power also has a “Renew Our Rivers” program with over 6 million tons of trash removed
- With the Morgan Fall re-licensing project, Georgia Power will be doing several environmental enhancement projects, recreation projects, and helping with the UCRK erosion and sediment control program.
- Gwinnett County has a strong stormwater education program for homeowners. The scope of that program continues to expand.
- Douglas County requires mandatory septic tank pumping.
- Cobb County has an enhanced stream buffer program, which widens to 200’ near the Chattahoochee River and Etowah River. Cobb County is also spending \$1 million per year to acquire floodprone properties. They are initiating a program to develop an Umbrella Mitigation Bank to maximize the dollars spent on restoration projects.
- The Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has a “Keep the Dirt Out” program.
- City of Cumming is focused on litter control and connecting dumpsters to sanitary sewer

Challenges

- West Point Lake is seeing an increase in algae.
- Portions of Newnan were built in the 1800s and the City is exploring those areas looking for illicit discharge connections. There are some areas where they are not sure if homes are hooked up to sewer or the stream.
- Is there a way to implement an agricultural stream buffer?
- Many areas in the Chattahoochee Basin will be re-developed and making sure the development is done responsibly is a concern.
- In denser re-development areas, there is a challenge between the benefits of the redevelopment and the need to provide stormwater management where it previously was not provided.
- Some communities are using regional facilities to promote development in these areas – DDCWSA is constructing a regional facility in downtown Douglassville with a pay in fee for developments that benefit from the pond.
- Corps of Engineers releases from Lake Lanier are causing erosion problems and perhaps flooding problems. Look at recommendations to the Corps to release responsibly to avoid downstream impacts.
- There is not a lot of money available for public education.
- Government officials need to set an example and be applauded when they do so.
- It is important to implement all of the good ideas out there not just some of them so the public can see a real difference being made.

Phosphorus and Septic System Discussion and Polling

Ms. Shorter led a brief discussion about reducing phosphorus and septic systems issues. Council members provided the following comments:

- Education of landscape companies (Pike's Nursery, Lowe's, Home Depot) was encouraged to educate homeowners on the need for soil tests
- Discussed the need for homeowners to watch their landscaping companies to ensure proper measures are followed on their properties
- There was significant discussion regarding the viability of an ordinance – the ordinance cannot prevent the sale of the fertilizer but just the use

Ms. Shorter concluded the meeting by polling Council members using an automated response system. The BAC was asked to choose their preferred answer to the following (% response):

- What is the best method of reducing phosphorus contributions from fertilizer?
 - A) Homeowner fertilizer education programs (21%)
 - B) Stream buffer restoration programs (0%)
 - C) Ordinances restricting phosphorus fertilizers without supporting soil samples (54%)
 - D) Other (20%)
- What is the best program to improve septic system quality?
 - A) Increase minimum lot size to 1 acre (9%)
 - B) Local construction inspections (36%)
 - C) Require mandatory inspections/pump out certification every five years (41%)
 - D) Homeowner education on proper maintenance (14%)

Ms. Hinkle reviewed the plan update schedule and reminded Council members to check email and the Web site for meeting announcements. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.