



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
Etowah Basin Advisory Council
MEETING SUMMARY
January 17, 2008**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Etowah Basin Advisory Council met on Thursday, January 17, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the RT Brown Memorial Library in Canton, GA.

Members Present

Brooke Anderson
Curtis Barnhart
Doris Cook
Bruce Coyle
Tom Heard
Marjorie Hicks
Nolton Johnson
David Kubala

Diane Minick
Becky Mixon
George Morton
Sean Nicholl
Don Sackman
Jim Secrist
Franklin Wagner

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 Etowah basin. Interests included: canoeing the Etowah River, Appalachian Trail, kayaking the Etowah, fishing Allatoona, Nancy and Petit Creek, Lake Allatoona, Toonigh Creek, All of it, family has a hog farm and land, Settingdown Creek, boating Allatoona, Stamp Creek headwaters, Etowah below the dam.

Basin Profile Overview

Kim Shorter of Metcalf & Eddy presented the draft Etowah basin profile and answered questions from the Council. Topics and issues discussed included:

- Questions about future land use and population projections
- Transportation population projections are being used for the update plan
- These numbers are not exclusively tied to land use but should relate
- Northwest District may have inventory of population and land use for comparison
- Regarding 303(d) list – Lake Allatoona Upper Etowah Comprehensive Water Study
- Lot of spotty monitoring, not comprehensive previous to LAUECWS
- Toxic algae blooms should be removed from text

- Page 4 Allatoona missing units should be 367,500 acre-feet
- Provide water and sewer tables by email for review
- EPD has developed future waste load allocations for wastewater demand
- The update team will also develop wastewater loads according to the RDC/ARC population projections
- The update team will also include septic in projections
- Wastewater and water needs should be identified along with what capacity is now available and if future needs are beyond current capacity, what is the plan for increasing both water and wastewater capacity?

Open Discussion

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

Successes

- Draft Etowah HCP – need to be careful how this is worded, there are other ongoing successes outside of the HCP and protection of the natural resources has been going on for a long time. Much of this protection is the result of the cities/counties/District work.
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Paulding County forest conservation w/ SPLOST – SPLOST was overwhelmingly approved by the voters. The area was an existing WMA owned by Jones Timber, Jones Timber offered the property to Paulding County and the purchase is a partnership with the State of Georgia, Land Trust and Paulding County
- TMDL hot topic for Paulding County because the schedule delays wastewater plant on-line date
- Protective buffers have been purchased along stream corridors beyond the 75 foot buffer
- Conservation easements for more stream bank protection
- Lake Allatoona - Upper Etowah Watershed Study – a lot of local funds have been invested in this process, there is a new report available online.
- Dawson County Upper Etowah looking at new reservoir and protection of 10,000 acres of Dawson forest
- Public education and news articles weekly to monthly in local paper by the Etowah W&SA plus workshops with extension service. River clean-up protection features companies in newspaper for good community press.
- Etowah W&SA efforts have led to a per capita usage down by 36%
- Lower Tallapoosa received two 319 grants

Challenges

- Primary water source for Cherokee County is not Allatoona it is the Etowah (change since the 2003 Plan)
- Basin Challenges, several of the fastest growing counties in the US
- Inter-basin transfers for City of Cumming pulling from Lake Lanier to discharge to Settingdown Creek
- Hiring and keeping qualified trained staff

- Septic, sewer evaluated in wastewater plan - for the wastewater plan, want support for moving existing septic systems onto sanitary sewer as it is expanded – this will help recharge drinking water supplies
- Some growth may be sewer, re-write to clearly indicate that not all future growth is expected to be on septic. Provide sample ordinances that require sewer connections.
- Current practices short circuit the hydrologic cycle, will be more important in the future – need to focus on return flows by getting people off of septic so that the water is available faster
- Inter basin transfers, drought, need for increase in return of water resources
- Developers see storage as a challenge – is there a way to pump detention facilities to the drinking water supplies?
- Lake Allatoona eutrophication is a challenge
- Further discussion indicates the lake is the problem but phosphorus is from upstream sources, likely urban and fertilizers.
- Restoration of impacted area includes incised tributaries and 303(d) listed streams/lake.
- Etowah HCP post construction inspection ordinance will be costly to implement by municipality.
- Etowah HCP culvert crossing and stream crossing ordinance could benefit the entire District. There was discussion about whether basin specific measures should be included as part of the Watershed Management Plan. A strong concern was requiring elements of the HCP that may not be required by the HCP in the future. Concern that EPD would not be able to enforce standards if they were different in different portions of the basin.

Phosphorus and Septic System Discussion and Polling

Ms. Shorter led a brief discussion about reducing phosphorus and septic systems issues. 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 (50%)
 - B) Stream buffer restoration programs (19%)
 - C) Ordinances restricting phosphorus fertilizers without supporting soil samples (31%)
 - D) Other (20%)
- What is the best program to improve septic system quality?
 - A) Increase minimum lot size to 1 acre (19%)
 - B) Local construction inspections (0%)
 - C) Require mandatory inspections/pump out certification every five years (6%)
 - D) Homeowner education on proper maintenance (75%)

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.