



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
Education Subcommittee Meeting Summary
April 8, 2008**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (Metro Water District) Education Subcommittee met on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the Harry West Room at the Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, Georgia.

Members Present:

Ellen Bauske, UGA Cop. Extension
Bob Bourne, Cobb County
Barbara Brown, DeKalb County
Kevin Carraher, Gwinnett County
Harold Harbert, Georgia EPD
Annie Huff, Henry County
Todd Hurt, UGA Cop. Ext. (Cherokee)
Marilyn Johnson, City of Atlanta
Samuel Jones, Dekalb County
Michael Klahr, City of Newnan
Erica Longstreet, Paulding County
Jennifer McLaurin, Fulton County

Alicia Pennie, DeKalb County
Terry Porter, City of Alpharetta
Timothy Pugh, Paulding County
Meredith Rundle, Gwinnett County
Barbara Seal, Gwinnett County
Mary Carol Sheffield, UGA Cop. Ext. (Paulding)
Brian Sterner, Gwinnett County
Steve Turner, City of Kennesaw
Brian Wiley, City of Gainesville
Emily Wingo, Georgia EPD

Charlene Njoroge welcomed the subcommittee, initiated self introductions and gave an overview of the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to review the new discussion topics proposed for the education chapters for all three water management plans developed by the Metro Water District.

Planned & Ongoing Workshops

Due to the plan update discussion, the committee was directed to send all announcements and upcoming activities via e-mail to Ms. Njoroge.

Public Awareness Discussion

Kim Shorter, with Metcalf and Eddy led the discussion regarding the plan update. The committee was presented with an outline of the existing and new themes for each plan. Below are the new topics that will be covered in each updated plan:

New Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan Topics

- Water conservation is an ongoing message, encouraging conservation both at home and work. Historical water use information on water bills and continued education on “typical” usage will provide water users with the information they need to reduce water demands.

- Water is a precious resource and therefore each target audience should be educated on how to avoid “water wasting”.
- Water efficiency in new homes and green buildings are new additions to the water conservation messages. There is a great deal of interest from the public as well as builders on creating more water efficient new homes and buildings as well as for the retrofit of existing plumbing fixtures.
- With limited water supplies in the Metro Water District, outdoor water use is considered consumptive and should be minimized. Tools and techniques such as native, drought tolerant landscaping, better irrigation controls, use of recycled water for car washing and other outdoor water use education will help minimize these consumptive uses.

Water Supply/Water Conservation Management Plan- Education TCC **Suggested Additions**

- ÷ The optional toolbox should include a fair number of options. Smaller governments may face manpower and financial restraints in implanting optional outreach activities, but if given a fair number of options they would have more options available to them.
- ÷ Clearly define drought tolerant plants and give examples.

New Watershed Management Plan Topics

- In compliance with the Post-Development Stormwater Management Ordinance and Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, new stormwater facilities in the Metro Water District must have a maintenance agreement with the local governments. Entities responsible for maintenance may include homeowners associations, homeowners, and commercial facilities are responsible for this maintenance. Education on proper stormwater facility/ Best Management Practice (BMP) maintenance will help them function as designed to protect water quality.
- Currently, both Lake Lanier and Lake Allatoona have levels of chlorophyll a that exceed state standards. Chlorophyll a is often associated with nutrient sources, such as phosphorus in commercial fertilizer. Proper application of fertilizer and recommendations on performing soil tests prior to fertilizing will help limit the loads to these important drinking water sources and recreational lakes.
- Stream buffer vegetation performs valuable functions in maintaining lower stream water temperatures, stabilizing and preventing stream bank erosion, and providing habitat and food sources for aquatic life. Education on the benefits of stream buffers may reduce the instances of accidental vegetation removal.

- Industry-specific messages that have been discussed in the past include proper disposal methods for construction materials (paint, concrete) and landscaper education on proper yard debris.
- It is proposed that the updated plan include an optional policy to eliminate the use of mobile car washes, including charity car washes. Developing a list of alternative environmentally-sensitive fund raisers could help provide an alternative to these charity car washes.
- Pools constructed prior to 1990 are not always connected to sanitary sewer. Proper pool care and end of year maintenance practices include dissipation of chlorine and proper discharge to prevent fish kills.

Watershed Management Plan- Education TCC Suggested Additions

- ÷ Introduce the issue of evasive plants in stream buffers.
- ÷ Stormwater survey about best practices throughout the Metro Water District.
- ÷ Provide guidance for small communities.
- ÷ Same requirements for draining pools should be applied to draining fountains to protect nearby water sources.
- ÷ Clarify the difference between what is required and what is recommended. This may cause problems when local governments are faced with an audit from Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

New Wastewater Management Plan Topics

- The proper disposal of pharmaceuticals is a new issue identified in the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan. Educating the public about the proper way to dispose of pharmaceuticals and household chemicals is needed.
- The proper maintenance of septic systems was a message in the 2003 Plan. Homeowners should know whether they are served by septic systems or sanitary sewer and how to properly maintain their septic system.
- The Long-term Wastewater Management Plan currently requires local utilities to develop a grease management program. A component of this is educating the public about the proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease (FOG). The presence of FOG in a sewer collection system continues to present maintenance challenges for wastewater collections personnel as well as causing water quality problems when sanitary sewer overflows occur due to grease blockage.
- There are several types of reuse; non-potable or “purple pipe” reuse, indirect potable reuse, and grey water. Indirect potable reuse is recommended in the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan as it helps sustain potable water supply. Indirect potable reuse has always occurred, but is now planned to sustain

water resources. Non-potable reuse refers to reuse water used for irrigation or industrial processes. Due to the expense, consumptive use, and high potential for cross connections with potable supplies, purple pipe networks for residential customers are not recommended. However, non-potable reuse is encouraged to off-set potable water needs, such as industrial processes or irrigation of golf courses and ball fields. Grey water reuse is currently being considered at the state level, but currently is not a recommended element of the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan. Grey water reuse is currently not allowed under state law due to restrictions within the current plumbing code.

- Minimizing inflow and infiltration and overflows through proper system maintenance is an important component of the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan. Education on the proper use of the sewer system and local reporting of missing manhole covers or overflows will help improve local maintenance.

Wastewater Management Plan- Education TCC Suggested Additions

- ÷ Clarify the definition of rapid response to sewer spills. The definition of rapid response varies based on the size of the water utility staff and its community.

General Comments

- ÷ Recommend EPD monitor small water withdrawals.
- ÷ Create a graphics toolbox on the Metro Water District website to be used by local governments when developing educational materials.
- ÷ Once new plan is adopted, create a brochure to highlight new measures introduced in the new plan.
- ÷ Work with the state to set aside funding for local government's education programs.
- ÷ Changing the target audience group name from "green industry" to "urban agriculture community".

Meeting Announcements

The next education subcommittee meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at 10AM.**

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.