



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District  
OCMULGEE BASIN ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Summary  
October 29, 2009**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Ocmulgee Basin Advisory Council met on Wednesday, October 29, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Collins Hill Library in Lawrenceville, GA.

**Members Present**

Larry Allen	Cassandra Barber
Michael Blackburn	Scott Cole, Sr.
Richard Edinger, Jr.	Shirley House
Deirdre Faye Lyons-Gary, DeKalb Co LWV	Martin McElhenny
Vikki McReynolds, BAC Chair	Tonja Halton Mincey, Henry Co W&SA
Paul Morgan	Petra Parker, Comm. Atlanta Board of Realtors
Jack Tanner, City of McDonough	Luis Torres
Susan Varlamoff, UGA	Michael Walker
Steve Williams, Building Greener LLC	

**Members Not Present**

Scott Brumbelow, GA Utility Contractors	Jimmy Carter, Jr.
Bob Donaghue	Tom Harrison, H2O Reps
Roger Hatch, Rockdale/DeKalb Co Farm Bureau	Wayne Haynie, Jordan, Jones & Goulding Inc.
Lawrence Kaiser	Mark Landers, U.S. Geological Survey

**Non Ocmulgee BAC Members Present**

Laurie Hawks, Brown and Caldwell  
Ligia Negru, Gwinnett Co. DWR/SWM  
Barbara Seal, Gwinnett Co. SWM

**Metro Water District Staff Present**

Matt Harper, Senior Principal Planner  
Steve Haubner, Principal Water Resources Engineer  
Heather Moody, Senior Program Specialist

**Welcome and Introductions**

BAC Chair Vikki McReynolds introduced Gwinnett County Board Designee Jim Scarbrough who began the meeting by welcoming the group on behalf of the Metro Water District Board. He said that the Board appreciates the BAC member's input and listens to what they have to say. Mr. Scarbrough also welcomed the group to Gwinnett and shared some facts and figures about the county.

### **About the Metro Water District**

Heather Moody gave a brief presentation on key aspects of the Metro Water District. She first explained where the District acquires its funding. Ms. Moody then provided more information on the Implementation Survey process and described the structure of the Annual Report. Lastly, she gave members an overview of the Georgia EPD audit process and how it relates to Metro Water District plan enforcement.

### **Review of the Watershed Management Plan**

Steve Haubner of the Metro Water District staff reviewed the newly adopted Watershed Management Plan. Mr. Haubner presented an overview of key watershed management issues and showed the BAC where to find specific information in the Plan. All BAC members were provided with a hard copy of the District's Watershed Management Plan.

A BAC member expressed that layoffs and a lack of funding have caused problems for local governments. He asked if discussions have taken place about how jurisdictions can seek out more federal funding. He added that some jurisdictions will struggle to implement and enforce measures in the plans without an infusion of more state and federal revenue. Steve Haubner replied that the Metro Water District has encouraged jurisdictions to take the stormwater utility approach to generate a dedicated source of funding. Mr. Haubner also noted that these are important conversations for communities to have with each other, with the State and with the District's governing board.

A member asked about the effects of the recent floods. Steve Haubner replied that he had discussed the flooding with several stormwater managers and, although this was an extremely rare storm event, there were signs that certain actions could have been taken to lessen the impact of the flooding. He said the event highlighted the need for local governments to effectively manage their stormwater infrastructure.

### **Discussion**

During a discussion at the end of the meeting, BAC members shared the following additional comments:

- Illegal dumping causes serious stormwater management problems. We must educate the public about the importance of proper trash disposal. During heavy rains, trash and debris can cause blockages in the systems and lead to flooding.
- Ocmulgee BAC Chair Vikki McReynolds said that we should make our congressional representatives aware of stormwater management issues and the need for increased funding. Too often problems are ignored until an event like the recent floods bring them to the public's attention.
- Public awareness and education is the first step. The message needs to come from every direction. We need to get citizens involved because individuals working together can have a big impact. Everyone should be part of the solution.

- The state should consider a special tax to raise funds for water infrastructure and public education.
- Often it does not occur to people that what they are doing is contributing to the degradation of our stormwater system. We have to educate citizens and change the mindset of our communities.
- Many members agreed that it is important to educate children because they will influence their parents and will grow up to be environmentally aware adults.

### **Facility Tour**

Laurie Hawks and Pete Wright of the Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources led Ocmulgee BAC members on a tour of the watershed improvement program underway at Collins Hill Park. The group visited a picturesque stream restoration site and viewed stormwater best management practices such as constructed wetlands and stormwater ponds.