

**MINUTES OF PEE DEE RIVER BASIN COUNCIL (RBC) MEETING (VIRTUAL) HELD ON JANUARY 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**RBC Members Present:** Jason Gamble, Mike Bankert, Megan Hyman, Cara Schildtknecht, Jeff Steinmetz, Bob Perry, Cliff Chamblee, Cricket Adams, Bill Wiegand, Lindsay Privette, Hughes Page, John Crutchfield, Jeff Parkey, Walt Beard, Tim Brown, Snipe Allen, Michael Hemingway, Cynthia Walters, John Rivers, & Doug Newton

**Absent:** Eric Krueger (Liz Fly, alternate, present), Frances McClary (Louis Drucker, alternate, present), Buddy Richardson, & Brandon Durant

**Planning Team Present:** JD Solomon, Scott Harder, Brooke Czwartacki, Andy Wachob, Matt Lindburg, Pam Miller, Thomas Walker, and Chikezie Isiguzo.

Total Attendance: 41

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

J. D Solomon (the Facilitator) called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and welcomed members to the eighth Pee Dee RBC meeting. He highlighted the main objectives of the meeting, which were to review the current items and to discuss future items. He stated that most members of the RBC were attending training. A check-in meeting was scheduled with SWAM training for the Pee Dee RBC for January due to data delays from NC for Surface Water modeling.

**REVIEW OF THE MEETING OBJECTIVES AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was unanimously approved. John Crutchfield made a motion to approve minutes and summary documents which was seconded by Michael Hemingway and unanimously approved.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**3. Status of Ongoing Items – (J. D. Solomon)**

**3.1 Review Water Demand Projections (Alex Pellet, SCDNR)**

J D. Solomon noted the need to confirm population forecasts, especially in Horry County, because it was extreme compared to the others, and there was some debate about population figures. Also, there was a question about the growth in water use by industrial and agricultural users in the model.

Alex Pellett noted that there are two major perspectives on agriculture and water use – one is premised on the assumption that agriculture will continue to grow, while the other is

premised on the assumption that agriculture will not continue to grow. Therefore, more data and information are needed to provide evidence and help build consensus. Regarding some municipal demands and how they can increase due to industrial growth, he noted that purchasing from the municipality is not necessarily directly correlated to the population, although the population would respond to that new industry. Again, there is limited data and information to incorporate into the demand projections. However, if Alex receives quantitative feedback from the stakeholders, we can incorporate it into the projections.

Alex explained to the members of the RBC the steps he is working to update the data for the surface water model and the next steps in sharing the results. He will provide the water demand projections on a per-user or a per-model object basis. The surface water model distributes those demands to each model user's portfolio of intakes. For the groundwater, he will provide the projections per well already distributed to the groundwater intake to wells.

Alex informed the members that the next meeting will have the surface water inputs and the stakeholder feedback. And then, moving forward, he will be working to get the groundwater demands in shape.

### **3.2 Pee Dee Basin Surface Water Model (John Boyer, CDM Smith)**

John Boyer presented a map showing possibilities for nine strategic nodes in the Pee Dee River Basin. He explained that the observations made by members of the RBC guided adding strategic nodes down on the lower part of the Pee Dee river and below where the Lumber River feeds into it. John further noted that more strategic nodes could be added as needed, especially after we start to see results and have a better understanding of the differences between planning scenarios. So, we always have the option of going back and adding some other spots.

He also explained that we could look at flows at the individual water user level. So, we are not just limited to strategic nodes. We can add a virtual gauge or not, or where withdrawal or discharge occurs. But this is the basic set that we are identifying for a comparison of flows between the scenarios. He invited members of the RBC for additional thoughts or comments.

### **3.3 Ground Water Model (Scott Harder, SCDNR)**

Scott Harder explained that the Groundwater model with the USGS was in the works and expected to run as scheduled.

QUESTIONS:

Will the members get a hands-on experience with the Groundwater model from USGS as they are having with the surface water model?

Scott Harder explained that there will be opportunities during the meetings to learn about the groundwater model, how it is set up, how it is used, and its capabilities only.

JD Solomon reminded the members of the RBC that USGS is trying to bring in more data, get the model right, and add more granularity to it.

#### **4. UPCOMING ITEMS (J D. Solomon)**

##### **4.1 Ecological Flows**

J. D Solomon pointed out the need for the members of the RBC to reach a consensus on doing an Ecological flows assessment. Where we do it, how many nodes, where those nodes may be, and the parameters. An expert can come to the next meeting of the RBC, or when the members of the RBC are ready, to provide further guidance to the RBC. The planning team will select a tentative date to invite the expert (Dr. Bower) pending the decision of the members of the RBC.

##### **4.2 Coastal Impacts/Waccamaw Water Supply – Small Group Meeting**

The current plan is to have a smaller group meeting, which will probably consist of JD Solomon as a facilitator with Buddy and/or Cara, some of the state agency folks, and coastal stakeholders. The objective is to talk about how the surface water and groundwater interact and move further inland, recognizing that the scope of our river basin plan does not include coastal tidal zones. The RBC may recognize the impact of areas outside the scope and consider making a recommendation to expand the scope in subsequent planning cycles. So hopefully, the small group can do that meeting in the next month and report back sometime in March 2023 with a preliminary report.

##### **4.3 Agricultural Economics in the Pee Dee Basin – Presentation**

JD Solomon suggested a presentation on agricultural economics in the Pee Dee basin. This presentation will provide the members the opportunity to understand water use and demand from an agricultural perspective. The members of the Pee Dee RBC agreed with the suggestion, and Tom Walker preliminarily agreed to invite an agribusiness extension agent from Clemson University to make the presentation in coordination with the planning team's preferences.

##### **4.4 Drought Management Plans in the Basin – Presentation (B&C)**

JD Solomon reminded the members that drought management recommendations are a part of the deliverables of the RBC. He proposed replicating what was done in other river basins by putting together the drought management plans of all users and comparing the water conservation plans.

Matt Lindburg provided further information on about 14 different summarized drought management plans. Each has a description of different triggers that would cause them to take different actions. The drought management plans have demand-side reductions at different levels of drought triggers. Several of them have alternate water supplies that they have identified that could be useful in drought conditions. All the information can be summarized in a presentation for members of the RBC.

Scott Harder clarified that in other river basins, the drought management plans are incorporated in the surface water management plans.

**COMMENT**

The Pee Dee should consider going beyond the drought management plan to other conditions experienced during freezing temperatures leading to burst pipes and increased demand.

JD Solomon responded that the issue might be more of a supply issue. However, the planning team will incorporate a presentation to cover the issue of low-flow/high-demand periods and water utilities.

**COMMENT**

There is a need to understand the economics behind water usage, food supply, and the drought management plan, especially for agricultural users. Therefore, the planned presentation by Clemson University agribusiness is essential.

**COMMENT**

There was a question about duck ponds and water usage which included a brief discussion about regulations and lack of data.

**4.5 Review of Edisto Strategies (Draft) – group review and discussion.**

JD Solomon informed members of the Pee Dee RBC that the draft Edisto River Basin Plan is out for public review. He explained that the Edisto process provides a good learning opportunity for the Pee Dee RBC. He invited members to review, at the minimum, the Executive Summary of the Edisto River Basin Plan.

JD Solomon to provide the link to the soft copy of the draft Edisto River Basin Plan to the members of the Pee Dee RBC for their review and record.

**5. UPCOMING MEETING AND SCHEDULE**

There is a field trip planned for March 2023. The field trip will be a kayak trip on the Black River, and the members of the RBC generally indicated interest in participating in the trip. The next

meeting featuring presentations will be held on February 28, 2023 at 2200 Pocket Road, Darlington, SC.

Minutes by: Chikezie Isiguzo and Tom Walker

Approved: 2/28/2023