Meeting Summary

Santee River Basin Council Meeting No. 3 (Hybrid Format)

Date:	February 11th, 2025
Time:	9:00 AM
Location:	Old Santee Canal Park's Learning Center (900 Stoney Landing Road, Moncks Corner, Sc 29461)
Prepared by:	CDM Smith
RBC Members Present:	Todd Biegger, Sarah Wiggins, Mike Wooten, Michael Melchers, Brandon Stutts, Riley Egger, John Grego*, Hixon Copp*, Alicia Wilson, Allan Clum, Guinn Wallover (Alternate for Allan Clum), Jason Thompson, David Wielicki
RBC Members Absent:	Jeff Ruble, W.E. Mickey Johnson, Jr.
Planning Team Present:	John Boyer, Kirk Westphal*, Amy Shaw*, Scott Harder, Brooke Czwartacki, Alexis Modzelesky, Joe Koon*, Leigh Anne Monroe*, Hannah Hartley, Megan Marini, Andrew Wachob*, Joseph Koon* **Attended virtually*

Action Items (New or Reminders)

1. (Reminder) RBC members should consider identifying an alternate who can fill in for them in they need to miss a meeting and should provide the alternates name and contact information to John Boyer.

Decisions

No decisions were made by the RBC.

Meeting Agenda

The following items were on the agenda, which was approved by RBC motion:

- Review of meeting objectives and approval of the agenda
- Public Comments
- Overview of Groundwater Resources
- Surface Water Hydrology 101
- Overview of Surface Water Resources
- Water Use
- Methods for Evaluating Water Availability
- Introduction to the Santee River Basin Surface Water Model

Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 9 am, with Michael Melchers welcoming the RBC members. Michael Melchers stated the meeting objectives and invited the RBC members for approval of the previous minutes and the agenda. The previous meeting minutes were approved by Riley Egger with a second by Alicia Wilson. The agenda was approved by Alicia Wilson with a second by Mike Wooten. John reviewed information covered during the January RBC meeting.

Brooke Czwartacki reviewed groundwater resources of the Santee River basin. She discussed the six confined aquifers across the Coastal Plain including the Surficial, Gordon, Crouch Branch, McQueen, Charleston, and Gramling. She reviewed how groundwater levels are monitored and how SCDES develops and uses potentiometrics maps to track changes in groundwater conditions, including areas being impacted by over-pumping.

Kirk Westphal provided an overview of hydrologic concepts including the water cycle, stream gauges, hydrographs, flow measurements, and statistical analysis of flow data. There was an emphasis on understanding flow variability and its implications for water resource management. The presentation also covered the importance of hydrological data in predicting future water availability and planning for climate change impacts.

Hannah Hartley discussed the surface water resources of the Santee River basin. She reviewed the contributing upstream basins and the major waterways and reservoirs within the Santee River basin, including the Congaree River, Lake Marion, Lake Moultrie, Cooper River, Santee River, and Ashley River.

Scott reviewed water use data from upstream basins as well as the Santee basin. The breakdown by water user sectors indicates the largest usage is from the water supply/utilities sector, with the industrial sector in second. The third largest water user sector is agricultural irrigation. Surface water is the primary water source in the Santee basin and makes up 94 percent of all water use compared to 6% percent from groundwater. Groundwater is primarily used by agricultural/irrigation users.

Scott discussed the approach detailed in the Water Planning Framework to determine when and where demand exceeds supply under varying scenarios. Definitions and examples of important terms were provided including physically available surface water supply, surface water condition, surface water supply, surface water shortage, and reach of interest. Scott outlined four water use scenarios that will be evaluated: (1) current surface water use, (2) permitted and registered water use, (3) moderate water-demand projection, and (4) high water-demand projection. He noted that the SWAM model will be used to evaluate each surface water management strategy.

John Boyer explained that the SWAM model is like a checkbook which accounts for water withdrawals, return flows (wastewater discharges), and and reservoir storage and evaporation. He noted that Santee River basin model is currently being updated. The model will be used to assess current supply availability, assess demand scenarios, assess the impacts of a full allocation scenario, evaluate drought management plans, and evaluate and prioritize water management strategies.

The next meeting will be held on March 11th, 2025, at the Jefferies Hydroelectric Station. The agenda for next month's meeting will include a discussion of Santee Cooper operations, Charleston Water System overview, and water demand projections.