



Edisto River Basin Council Phase 4 Progress Report

June 2023

1.0 Introduction

The South Carolina State Water Planning Framework requires River Basin Councils (RBCs) to prepare and submit progress reports after each phase of the river basin plan development. This progress report covers Phase 4 of the Edisto River basin planning process. This progress report spans the period from July 16, 2022 through June 16, 2023.

This progress report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of Phase 4, including key milestones reached and completion of the Edisto River Basin Plan.

2.0 Activities and Accomplishments

2.1 RBC Meetings

Five RBC meetings were held during this planning period. The meetings covered activities associated with completing Phase 4, including development of plan recommendations, an implementation plan, progress metrics, and the Draft and Final Edisto River Basin plans. Hybrid RBC meetings were held in July, August and November of 2022 and April of 2023 at the Clemson Edisto Research Center in Blackville. One virtual RBC meeting was held in December 2022.

2.2 Phase 3 Objectives

The objectives of Phase 4 were to:

- Prepare and issue a Draft River Basin Plan for public comment
- Conduct a public meeting to present the Draft River Basin Plan
- Accept and address public comments on the Draft River Basin Plan
- Prepare a Final River Basin Plan and present the final plan at a public meeting

2.3 Accomplishments

Subcommittees Activities

No subcommittee meetings were held during Phase 4.

Development of Plan Recommendations

During this reporting period, the RBC discussed and developed planning process, technical, policy, legislative, and regulatory recommendations. The recommendations, most of which were consensus-based, were documented in Chapter 9 of the Plan. Recommendations related to drought response were documented in Chapter 8 of the Plan. Consensus was not reached on a small subset of recommendations focusing on policy, legislative, and regulatory issues. For these recommendations, the RBC member's reasons for voting for and against proposed recommendations were documented in the



Plan to provide future decision makers with an accurate representation of the range of RBC member perspectives.

Development of an Implementation Plan

The RBC developed an Implementation Plan to establish a path for implementing the water management strategies selected and documented in Chapter 7 of the plan, and the recommendations documented in Chapters 8 and 9. The Implementation Plan identified six overarching objectives which encompassed the suite of water management strategies and recommendations identified by the RBC. For each objective, strategies were identified to achieve the objective, and 5-year actions to implement the strategies were developed. For each action, a responsible party or parties was identified and the cost of implementing the action was estimated. Where possible, the RBC prioritized strategies and actions. Potential funding sources for each action were also identified and summarized.

Development of the Draft and Final Edisto River Basin Plan

In January 2023, the RBC finished work on the Draft Edisto River Basin Plan. A public meeting was held on February 15th in Orangeburg to introduce the Draft Plan and begin to accept public comments. Written comments were submitted by two members of the public, one alternate Edisto RBC member, and one RBC member. The RBC reviewed and documented responses to the Draft Plan comments in an appendix to the Plan and issued the Final River Basin Plan on June 1st at a public meeting in Blackville.

3.0 Issues Impacting Schedule and Funding

No significant issues were identified that impacted funding of the planning process through completion of Phase 4. The Phase 4 schedule was extended to allow sufficient time for public notice of the draft plan availability and for scheduling and holding public meetings.

4.0 Challenges

Achieving full consensus on approval of the Draft and Final Edisto River Basin Plan proved to be a challenge, even though all the identified water management strategies, and most of the recommendations (except for several policy, legislative, and regulatory recommendations) were based on RBC consensus. Two members representing the Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation water interest category did not vote to approve the Final Plan. These members expressed concern not as much with the Plan itself, but with the overall planning process, and indicated their belief that agriculture was not fairly represented in the planning process. One member of the Water-based Recreation water interest category also did not vote to approve the Final Plan, citing his concern that the Final Plan does not address safe yield and minimum instream flows in the basin. However, all three dissenting members indicated their willingness and desire to continue serving as RBC members, which suggests their commitment to the next phase of the planning process focusing on implementation.

During Phase 4, one RBC member representing the Water and Sewer Utilities water interest category resigned from the RBC after leaving his water utility position. During (and after) the April 2023 RBC meeting, RBC members were asked if they wished to continue serving out their initial 2, 3, or 4-year term, and/or extend their 2- or 3-year term. Four members indicated their need to retire from the RBC



and the remaining 16 members indicated their desire to continue serving on the RBC. The RBC membership as of June 2023 is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Edisto RBC Membership as of June 2023.

Name	Organization	Interest Category	Appointment Date and Term Length (Years)
Members Electing to Continue Serving on the Edisto RBC			
Bell, Glenn	RBM Forestry, LLC	Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation	March 2020 (4)
Walther, Jeremy	Walther Farms	Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation	March 2020 (3)
Weathers, Landrum (RBC Vice Chair)	Weathers Farms/Circle W Farms	Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation	March 2020 (3)
Bagwell, Laura	Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District	At-Large	March 2020 (2)
Dr. Bass, John	Retired	At-Large	March 2020 (4)
Marvin, Alta Mae	Edisto River Canoe and Kayak Trail Commission	At-Large	March 2020 (2)
Waters, Jerry	Palmetto Realty and Land Co.	At-Large	March 2020 (4)
Stutts, Brandon ²	Dominion Energy South Carolina	Electric-Power Utilities	March 2020 (3)
Dr. Bishop, David	The Nature Conservancy	Environmental	March 2020 (2)
Krispyn, Hugo	Friends of the Edisto and Edisto Riverkeeper	Environmental	March 2020 (3)
Stallworth, Hank (RBC Chair)	Retired (SCDNR Chief of Staff)	Environmental	March 2020 (3)
Williams, Will	Western South Carolina Economic Development Partnership	Industry and Economic Development	April 2021 (2)
Duke, Joel	Aiken County	Local Governments	March 2020 (4)
Odom, Eric	Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities	Water and Sewer Utilities	March 2020 (3)
Thompson, Jason	Charleston Water System	Water and Sewer Utilities	March 2020 (4)
Jowers, J.J.	Public	Water-Based Recreational	March 2020 (3)
Members Electing to Retire from Serving on the Edisto RBC			
Tolbert, Alex	Orangeburg Country Club	Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation	March 2020 (2)
Haralson, Johney	Bamberg Soil and Water District	Local Governments	March 2020 (4)
Aakhus, Mark	Town of Edisto Beach	Local Governments	March 2020 (2)
Sievers, Amanda	Orangeburg County	Industry and Economic Development	March 2020 (3)