Pee Dee River Basin Council (RBC) Meeting #21 Minutes
February 27th, 2024

RBC Members Present: Cliff Chamblee, Buddy Richardson, Bob Perry, Doug Newton, John Crutchfield, Michael Hemingway, Megan Hyman, Cynthia Walters, Cara Schildtknecht, Hughes Page, Jason Gamble, Tim Brown, Mike Bankert, Eric Krueger, & Lindsay Privette

Absent: Cricket Adams, Everett Allen, Walt Beard, John Rivers, Frances McClary, Jeff Parkey, & Jeff Steinmetz

Planning Team Present: JD Solomon, Matt Lindburg, Scott Harder, Brooke Czwartacki, Andy Wachob, Alexis Modzelesky, Leigh Anne Monroe, Hannah Hartley, Jeff Allen, Thomas Walker, and Chikezie Isiguzo.

Total Attendance: 40

1. **Call the Meeting to Order (Buddy Richardson, J. D. Solomon - Facilitator)**
   a. Review of Meeting Objectives
   J. D. Solomon (the Facilitator) called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and welcomed members to the 21st Pee Dee RBC meeting. He explained that the February 2024 meeting virtual meeting required new login requirements to ensure a secure meeting environment for the RBC. The main objectives of the meeting included an update on the status of Groundwater modeling, lessons from the City of Florence Conjunctive Water Use, and updates on the draft River Basin Plan Chapters.

   b. Approval of Agenda, February 27th Minutes and Summary
   The members unanimously approved the February 2024 Pee Dee RBC meeting agenda. Buddy Richardson made a motion to adopt the minutes and summary from the January 23th, 2024, Pee Dee RBC meeting, seconded by Eric Krueger. They were approved unanimously.

2. **Public/Agency Comment (JD Solomon)**
   There were no public/Agency comments.

3. **Status of Groundwater Modeling (Andrea Hughes, USGS)**

   Andrea Hughes reminded the members of the Pee Dee RBC that USGS is working on the groundwater models with the Upper Midwest Water Science Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Currently, work on recalibrating the parent model has been fast-tracked and successfully tested, leading to a forward-running parent model. The USGS took advantage of the opportunity to ensure that model layers reflect a more natural flow system of the coastal system. She explained that the USGS is still updating the model inputs for the parent model. Now, when the inputs are updated, the USGS will run a test on the parent model. She informed the members that USGS has made significant progress and will meet the adjusted timelines.

   Bradley Harken (USGS) noted that working with the Midwest Water Science Center was a

great opportunity that has helped fast-track the process and improved the quality of the model.

Scott Harder informed the members of the Pee Dee RBC that SCDNR was also working on a groundwater report that will be released by Spring 2024.

4. **Florence Conjunctive Water Use Experience (Michael Hemingway)**

Michael Hemingway explained that the City of Florence transitioned from 100% groundwater use to conjunctive use by investing in surface water use. He noted that the City has a total capacity of 20.46 million gallons per day (MG), which is made up of 13.46 MG groundwater permitted capacity and 10 MG surface water permitted capacity. He presented the summary of the City of Florence's water use from 2013 to 2023, and on average, the city used 14.32 MG annually, out of which groundwater accounted for 9.58 MG (67.2%) and surface water accounted for4.75 MG (32.8%). Furthermore, the Surface Water Plant operated for 18 hours per day until 2022, when, based on growth, it started 24 hours of operation. The use of surface water in the City of Florence has improved, reducing reliance on groundwater sources.

Michael presented the system production zone map showcasing the geographical distribution of groundwater and surface water use in the city and described how the city plans to deepen conjunctive use. He also described the infrastructure that supports the storage, distribution, and metering of water in the City of Florence. He explained that one of the reasons the city is expanding its surface water capacity is to meet its current permitted future demand.

Q: What treatment challenges did the City of Florence face when introducing surface water use?
A: Michael explained that the city had operational challenges in figuring out where it brought the surface water facility online and which groundwater facilities to take offline so the system would not be over-pressurized. The city had to learn how fast the surface water impacted the distribution system and how to manage the water flow and levels in the storage tanks. Idea with expanded surface water Florence can put groundwater into reserves.

Q: Does the City of Florence have blending problems?
A: Michael explained that blending problems have gradually decreased since the city moved to 24-hour operation from 18 hours per day, reducing quality impact.

Q: Plans for reservoirs to serve Florence?
A: There's a 20 MG reservoir on-site. We do use raw water reservoir for high peak situations.

Q: Reservoir built on the Pee Dee?
A: There was a Pee Dee River Coalition that used to meet around the 2004 time frame but it hasn't been active recently.

Q: What's Florence's per capita water use? And have you seen it change much over time?
A: It has gone down since 2008 about 25% due to improving sinks, toilets, showerheads, etc. Bad for finances – revenues but from an environmental standpoint it is good.

Q: Is there a flow constraint on the Pee Dee at your intake?
A: We have 4 intakes at 4 different elevations. We can pull from a higher elevation.

Q: Difference in quality of water at the intake?
A: River quality changes all the time. Worst is higher flow with the water levels and higher sediment and higher particulates.

Q: How does community affordability work in Florence?
A: Tiered billing structure. 800 people are delinquent each month. We have financial assistance program. SW is much more expensive - $1/gall for groundwater and $4/gall for surface water. 10 year incremental rate. Since Covid and due to inflation including surface water and other infrastructure, Florence will increase 8% for water and 9% for sewer.

Q: What % of water usage is commercial
A: Commercial is around 15%, 11 percent of water users. Peak – April thru October for water use and November thru March it decreases 10-20%. 15% is consistent year-round. Drop in December for industries for maintenance.

Q: Sewer water reuse?
A: We use wastewater in the plant (non-potable). Industries don't want effluent and it goes into the Pee Dee south of the intake.

5. **Chapter Status Discussion (Matt Lindburg)**

Matt Lindburg presented an update on the draft of the Pee Dee RBC plan. He noted that while Chapter One has been reviewed, feedback for Chapter Two suggested the inclusion of a subsection on land conservation and protection. Work on the subsection is in progress, and once concluded, a draft will be sent for review. The subsection discusses the importance of land protection and uses data to describe the lands protected in the Pee Dee basin.

Chapter 3 –Data edits and map revisions to improve the readability have been completed, and the draft has been sent to members for review. The feedback is expected after three weeks, which is March 18, 2024.
Q: Chapter 3–Table 3-1 – 75th percentile was shown and not 25th percentile.
A: We could do 25th percentile.
Q: A lower flow state/percentile might be good to include.
A: Probably more meaningful.

Comments on Chapter 8 have been received, and the update is ongoing. Some comments suggested that the chapter should include a communication plan for drought response and a clear understanding of the status of drought management plans for small water systems,

some of which have been merged into larger water systems. The edits will be completed and presented for preliminary approval in the March 2024 RBC meeting.
Need feedback in recommendations in the Broad River Basin, there are water supplier meetings – is there one in the Pee Dee?
Coordinated messaging in the Pee Dee folks weren't aware of that happening.
Q: Drought management plans – update them. Communities may need to update their plans.
A: Developed in the 2000s. Some of these systems are served by larger systems that serves smaller systems. Ch 8 recommendation – water suppliers update their plans.
C: Last month or two I did mention to Pee Dee rural water group to update their plan after taking over smaller systems.
C: Could follow up.
C: Plan for drought – look at large and small list systems.

Chapter 5 will be completed as soon as the results of the groundwater model are available. However, the results of the surface water section will be shared with Pee Dee RBC members.

Chapters 6 and 7 will be drafted by summer.

6. **Closing Comments and Upcoming (Buddy Richardson and JD Solomon)**

Buddy Richardson appreciated the Planning team's organization of the virtual meeting and efforts to keep everyone safe in the virtual environment. FMU has an upcoming World Water Day event.

The agenda for the March 2024 Pee Dee RBC meeting will include a discussion on Chapter 3 of the RBC Plan.

Members were invited to indicate their interest on the planned field trip for Spring 2024, intake for Florence visit. RBC members also were asked to e-mail Cara S if interested in a kayaking trip.

The next meeting will be held on March 26, 2024
The meeting concluded at 10:10 AM.

Minutes: Chikezie Isiguzo and Tom Walker
Approved: 3/26/24