

Edisto River Basin Council

**July 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

**Edisto RBC members in attendance:** Hugo Krispyn, John Bass, Amanda Sievers, Alta Mae Marvin, Hank Stallworth, Kirk Bell, Jeremy Walther, David Bishop, Landrum Weathers, Johnney Haralson, Mark Aakhus, Alex Tolbert, JJ Jowers, Joel Duke, Eric Odom, Jason Thompson, Laura Bagwell & Will Williams

**Edisto RBC members absent:** Jerry Waters, Alan Mehrzad (Camden Kittrell, alternate, present) & Brandon Stutts

**Planning Team present:** John Boyer, Tom Walker, Leigh Anne Monroe, Scott Harder, Joe Gellici, Joe Koon, Kaleigh Sims, Matt Petkewich & Andrea Hughes

**Total present:** 40

1. Call the Meeting to Order (Hank Stallworth, RBC Chair) 9:00–9:10
    - a. Review of Meeting Objectives
      - Hank reviewing the objectives
    - b. Approval of Agenda
      - Motion to approve agenda – Hugo K 1<sup>st</sup> and David B 2<sup>nd</sup> – unanimous
    - c. Approval of June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, Minutes and Summary
      - Motion to approve – Landrum W 1<sup>st</sup> and David B 2<sup>nd</sup> – unanimous
  
  2. Public and Agency Comment (John Boyer) 9:10–9:15
    - a. Public Comment Period<sup>1</sup>
      - Any public comments? None received
    - b. Agency Comment Period – none received

Becky Davis - Clemson Extension introduction– No other comments
  
  3. Old Business / New Business – RBC Open Discussion Opportunity 9:15–9:20  
(Hank Stallworth and John Boyer, CDM Smith)
    - Overview of drought status (June – July 2022)
    - Stream flows did not hit a trigger level in the Charleston area but the river was dropping quick for a moment
    - Agriculture had a dry run for a week or so
  
  4. Update of Draft Edisto River Basin Plan Chapters (John Boyer) 9:20–9:30
    - Will incorporate edits in draft that goes out in a month or so
    - No other comments
  
  5. Review of June Meeting and RBC-identified Recommendations 9:30–9:45
    - John providing overview of June meeting summary
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- Approved low flow management strategy
- Overview of planning process recommendations
- Overview of technical and program recommendations

6. Discussion and Identification of Policy, Legislative and Regulatory Recommendations *(with break at 10:30)* (John Boyer) 9:45–11:30

- John providing overview of policy, legislative, or regulatory recommendations
- If anyone wants copies of the actual surface water act John B can send them out
- Recommendation: minimum instream flow 20% median, not 20% mean
  - Don't think it's the most important recommendation on the list but important to acknowledge the use of median vs mean
  - Statistically which is the best to look at for management? Would like for DNR, DHEC or the Nature Conservancy to weigh in on how it affects ecology
  - Have to ask yourself what values are most protective
- If you are not comfortable making a recommendation it is okay, we want you to understand what you are recommending but also do not want to get in the weeds on some of these
- Safe yield mean at Givhans is available 43% of the time, safe yield median is available 60.7% of the time at Givhans ferry - need to be realistic about what is actually available
- Safe yield mean across the state is available 46% of the time and safe yield median is available 64% of the time across the state
- First thing we need to agree on is how much is really available
- Where do we go ? Do we recommend small certain changes?
  - I think we can make meaningful recommendations
- Feel like we are in a better position to make recommendations and have discussions around water than others like the General Assembly but it might be too big of an ask, but we can work around the edges to make recommendations like agreeing on mean vs median , etc.
- Would love to see what the impact is on bio standards and see what changes species composition, hear more about how it impacts recreation regarding mean vs median. Seems like the real power is how much you permit and allocate
  - Would add that in the Agriculture sector you see seasonal changes in river that are subject to rain and where are we in evapotranspiration
  - Sometimes the system is going to run dry and agriculture should not take the hit because it ran dry
- Would have to double check if it's a legislative or regulatory change from mean to median
- Don't know that us having an opinion on median vs mean really impacts anything we ought to be more talking about safe yield should be safe, minimum instream flow should be applied to everyone, etc. what do we want our plan to acknowledge?
- Hear you say we should do higher level things but I think just because we have been in the weeds and we have spent the time to understand the statistics then we should take advantage of that knowledge and we should address it if the group agrees its something we should recommend
- Just saying we do not have to develop it out so that it is spelled out in a pamphlet but we say we think this is problem here is a potential solution can you look at this
- I think we owe it to ourselves to at least include a narrative in the plan about these major points that need to be considered, talked about, thought about, in the event we cannot come to a consensus

## Break 1

10:47am

- More concerned with allocation side than the MIF side
- Comes back to ultimate question of what is available, how do you accomplish some of this without having worse unintended consequences
- Lets allocate based on the right kind of math and numbers – our job is to think bigger and about others that might need something and it might require some people to use allocated water based on more sound data – reasonable criteria with the process – shouldn't be able to lock up water for no reason
- What about registrations that have no intention of ever withdrawing ? why can't we change registration to say if you do not use within certain time then the allocation can go to another withdrawer
- Can we have Leigh Anne talk about this new permit and registration stuff a little ?
  - If someone is in between two well users, we would try to figure out what aquifer they are in and what the impact is and during renewal process they are reassessed, and we talk to them and make give them more to establish what they need or maybe you need less and then we can reassess and talk about reducing permit
  - Why does reasonable use not apply to Surface water?
    - Not sure, but maybe came up during stakeholder process – Rob would probably know more about that
- Good to consolidate thoughts of why this is or is not a good idea through a survey does everyone agree to do that?
  - Yeah there is support of this
- Any other ideas for new law, reg, or ordinances ?
  - Legislative funding for mobile irrigation program
    - Add retrofits
  - Leg. Funding for water utility audits and water control/ water loss funding
  - Applying for funding needs to be made much easier less time consuming, and inexpensive
  - Support for completion of funding applications
  - Contingency source funding
- Restructuring existing groups or agencies
  - None

## 7. Implementation Plan Development (*and working Lunch*) (John Boyer)

11:30–1:30

John providing overview of implementation plan

- a. Prioritized, five-year objectives
  - b. Funding needs and potential sources
  - c. Five-year implementation schedule
  - d. Long-term planning objectives
- Proposed objectives
    - Reduce demand to conserve water resources
    - Conserve surface water during low flow conditions
    - Augment source of supply
    - Protect groundwater supplies and existing users
    - Improve technical understanding of water resource management issues
    - Effectively communicate RBC findings and recommendations

## Rank and prioritize objectives

- Will there be funding for this stage?
  - We will have to understand that limitation
- DHEC can help with groundwater monitoring programs
- Should we have something about funding for monitoring well programs ?
  - Could add this to the actions
- Protect groundwater supplies and existing users
  - Should it say to encourage locating new pumping?
    - Yes
- Should it say develop model for areas of concern like Calhoun county or is this only for Calhoun?
  - Not only for Calhoun so we will update to say areas of concern like Calhoun
- Who is really going to volunteer to take the reigns on all of this moving forward after the plan?
  - DNR will support any way they can, but it is important that the public gets the message from council too
- Funding needs for each action will be finalized before next RBC meeting
- Do you think we should prioritize the objectives?
  - Comment: re word #1. Just to say reduce demand to conserve water resources
  - Make #6 'effectively communication RBC findings' more of a priority
  - Re-prioritizing 4,5,6 and as one group

### 8. Identification of Progress Metrics (*time permitting*) (John Boyer) 1:30–1:50

- Reviewed suggested progress metrics in the planning framework
- Add securing funding
- Add success of implementing recommended water conservation strategies
- Maybe one of the 5 year actions is to identify progress metrics
- Write progress metrics centered around objectives

### 9. Upcoming RBC Agenda and Schedule (John Boyer) 1:50–1:55

- August 17- finalize recommendations and implementation plan
- September (TBD) release draft basin plan, public meeting
- October (TBD) incorporate public comments and prepare response to public comments
- November (TBD) public meeting and release final basin plan
  - Side comment: we think attendance has gone down and people are getting burned out
  - We do feel there are ways to streamline the process so that it does not take so long and they can learn from this basin

### 10. Meeting Conclusion (Hank Stallworth, RBC Chair) 1:55–2:00

Minutes by: Kaleigh Sims and Tom Walker

Approved: 8/17/22

**RBC Chat:**

08:43:48 From John to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

good morning

08:44:34 From Thomas Walker to John(Direct Message):

good morning Dr Bass

08:58:17 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

likely will start a bit late as we wait for a quorum

08:58:38 From John to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

no problem

09:01:26 From EREC Auditorium to Everyone:

Bear with us... a few stragglers still rolling in.

09:03:03 From Amanda Sievers to Everyone:

Good morning. Got it!

09:07:21 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

any public comments?

09:07:37 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

agency comment period

09:07:58 From David Thachik, SCEMD to Everyone:

Nothing from SCEMD.

09:09:59 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

can everyone hear Elliot?

09:10:06 From jowersj to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

its a lot better now

09:10:07 From Thomas Walker to kaleigh sims(Direct Message):

ok thanks

09:10:13 From John to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

yes

09:10:16 From Thomas Walker to jowersj(Direct Message):

thanks

09:10:21 From Thomas Walker to John(Direct Message):

thanks

09:11:34 From Mark Aakhus to Everyone:

yes

09:11:45 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

thanks

09:19:34 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

is john coming through better now?

09:19:52 From John to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

yes

10:15:00 From jowersj to Everyone:

Does changing from mean to median ensure more or less water is left in the river?

10:15:54 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

i'll ask for you in a second

10:35:57 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

10 min break

11:48:32 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

quick break for lunch

13:15:55 From John to Thomas Walker(Direct Message):

conserve water resources on water demand

13:48:37 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

thanks all