Pee Dee River Basin Council (RBC) Meeting #18 Minutes
December 19th, 2023

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

Absent: Mike Bankert, Walt Beard, Frances McClary, Jeff Parkey, & Cricket Adams

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

Total Attendance: 49

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 19th Pee Dee RBC meeting. He explained that the meeting was changed from hybrid to virtual to accommodate delays in Groundwater Modeling. The main objectives of the meeting included an update of the groundwater modeling, lessons learned from the 2001 drought, and updates on the draft River Basin Plan Chapters.

   b. Approval of Agenda, November 28th Minutes and Summary
   The members unanimously approved the November 2023 Pee Dee RBC meeting agenda. Bob Perry – 1st moved a motion to adopt the minutes and summary of the November 28, 2023, Pee Dee RBC meeting, seconded by Buddy Richardson – 2nd. JD Solomon invited the members of the Pee Dee RBC to pay particular attention to the presentation on the Groundwater modeling discussion by USGS because the members will need to decide on how to progress given that the model was not working as expected.

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

3. **Status of Groundwater Modeling (Andrea Hughes and Jimmy Clark)**

   Jimmy Clark and Andrea Hughes, USGS, explained that the modeling team was informed of significant additional water pumping data from North Carolina. The data is from a separate water use program, the Water Withdrawals and Transfer Program, and it is not in the parent Coastal Plain model. This development is expected to delay the model development process by five to six months. The modeling team needs to incorporate the new data into the parent model and then recalibrate the model. The regional Pee Dee model will then be updated from the parent model. The update is expected to make the model more accurate and ultimately more useful to the Pee Dee RBC.
   Scott Harder apologized to the members of the Pee Dee RBC over the issue of the Groundwater model. He noted that the model, when completed, will have a great utility in

the longer term, a valuable tool for water planning. He also noted the need to collaborate with North Carolina in water planning programs that are of mutual interest.

JD Solomon invited the members of the Pee Dee RBC to comment on whether they would continue the process without a groundwater model (and include the model results when it is available), consider alternative data sources, or rely on knowledge and information from other sources to guide their planning decisions. He expressed concerns over members losing interest if the process is delayed.

Comments:

Groundwater models are essential in water planning, so if patience is required, it will be better for comprehensive and reliable models.

I don't want to base any decisions on bad data. Although there is a risk of losing people because of the new timeline, it is better to get a reliable model.

It really gives me heartburn to think about going to workarounds and things like that versus what is in the grand scheme of a state water plan that is supposed to have some viability out to 2070. What is five months in that? So, let's wait and do our best to stay engaged until this thing is tuned up. Maybe the drafting and revision of the chapters and writing will be done. It may be a way for us to keep our minds and remember everything we have learned up to this point.

I think that exercising some patience and really holding out for good data is important. I think, especially, we don't have a lot of information from the coast on water. So, I think having better coverage with the groundwater makes sense.

We have many resources available to us. But I'm thankful that they are forthcoming with us to tell us that they're not quite comfortable with the data that is being presented. So, I certainly appreciate them making the call because they are not comfortable with the information for us to base the decision on. And I am sure that they are diligently working on it to go ahead and get it to where it is with hard numbers, where we can make decisions. Because if we are going to make decisions, we need to make them on something that is factual and that we can lean on, and that they feel comfortable with. I just hope that there is something that we can do to fill the void during these next five months that we can spend some time on between now and then.

How definite is the five-month timeline?

Andrea Hughes explained that when the parent model was developed, it took a long time because a mesh was built from scratch, and everything about the model from the previous version that had been calibrated through 2004 was revised. The USGS already has the framework in place with this model. The USGS will scour back through over the next few weeks and make sure it has every single bit of data it can find and then run the calibrations. The USGS plans on running a one or two-week intensive workshop with the folks from the

Upper Midwest Water Science Center to get the parent model in a forward running condition to begin the calibration and proceed from there.

4. **Lessons Learned from 2001 Drought and Recovery (John Crutchfield)**

John Crutchfield presented an electric utility perspective of lessons learned from the 2001 drought. He noted that between 1998-2002, South Carolina experienced a record level drought. The SC Drought Response Committee designated all 46 Counties in the State at the Extreme Drought Level in August 2002. Some of the most extreme conditions and impacts were observed in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin. Saltwater Intrusion into Water Supply Intakes was a main stakeholder concern in the Lower Pee Dee River.

He summarized the main lessons learned. Firstly, water is a shared resource. All Stakeholders need a Chair at the table to develop solutions.

` Secondly, Communication and collaboration are key elements in developing mutually agreeable solutions. There is a need to timely inform resource agency stakeholders, Governmental Policy Makers, and the general public on developing events. Also, there is a need for a communications plan that identifies and notifies stakeholders in a timely manner with consistent conservation messages across the region. Following the drought, there was a Relicensing Comprehensive Settlement Agreement signed by 12 major stakeholders. Also, Duke Energy participates in the SC PPAC, Pee Dee River Basin Council, and Yadkin-Pee Dee Water Management Group.

Thirdly, the development of a Drought Management Plan (LIP) with staged actions depending on drought severity. The Plan is adaptive and flexible enough to allow stakeholders to respond appropriately to changing conditions.

5. **Chapter Updates (Matt Lindburg)**

Matt Lindburg noted that Chapters One and Two will be presented during the January 2024 meeting for vote and preliminary approval. He mentioned that Michael Hemingway provided a correction on his title that was listed in the table of RBC members in Chapter One, and the corrections were made. There was no additional feedback on Chapter Two.

The Subcommittee has reviewed the initial version of Chapter Three, which focused on surface and groundwater resources and the tools we use to evaluate those resources. It will be presented to the members of the Pee Dee RBC for review when there is a clearer picture of where we are going with the groundwater approach.

The Subcommittee completed the review of Chapter Five in December 2023. We have received some comments and are working on them. Chapter Five talks about the results of the hydrologic analysis. And it is focused on the surface water piece right now. But there is a groundwater piece there as well, so we may need to kind of recalibrate how we approach the discussion in Chapter Five, so we might just put a pause on that one until after January

as well.

An initial version of Chapter Eight was sent out to the Subcommittee and SCDNR. That comment period is open until Friday, December 22nd, 2023. We have got some feedback so far both from Michael Hemingway and Tim Brown. There are a few communities/water providers that had drought management plans, but now those communities are being served by other entities. Consequently, those drought management plans are no longer in effect. The text and tables in Chapter Eight have been updated to reflect this position.

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

J. D. Solomon appreciated the members of the Pee Dee RBC for their participation in the year 2023. He expressed the hope that the January 2024 meeting will be hybrid, with more people attending physically, because the members of the Pee Dee RBC will make some important decisions during the meeting.

Buddy Richardson appreciated all the members of the Pee Dee RBC and JD Solomon for facilitating the meetings effectively in 2023.

The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2024

The meeting concluded at 10:22 AM.

Minutes: Chikezie Isiguzo and Tom Walker
Approved: January 23, 2024

RBC Chat:

08:58:29 From Megan Hyman to Everyone:
Good morning all
08:58:39 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
morning!
09:02:57 From mike b to Everyone:
I cant hear, I am gonna leave and come back
10:09:28 From mhemingway to Everyone:
John - great detailed presentation!
10:19:14 From Matt Lindburg, Brown and Caldwell to Everyone:
Great presentation, John. Thank you.
10:19:42 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
great job John, eye opening for sure
10:22:33 From Jimmy Clark (USGS) to Everyone:
Thank you all for your understanding and support!
10:22:34 From damatya to Everyone:
Thanks for great discussion presentations on USGS GW modeling and SC Drought. Happy Holidays to you all.