

MINUTES OF UPPER SAVANNAH RIVER BASIN COUNCIL MEETING (HYBRID FORMAT) HELD ON JULY 26TH, 2023. STARR-IVA WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT OFFICE STARR SC 104 ROY ARNOLD RD. STARR, SC 29684.

RBC Members Present: Mack Beaty, Tonya Bonitatibus, Chcuk Connolly, Cheryl Daniels, John Hains, Tim Hall, Katie Hottel, Daniel Milam, Jill Miller, Dan Murph, Reagan Osbon, Billy Owens, Jeff Phillips, Carl Price, Melisa Ramey, Cole Rogers, Harold Shelley, Alan Stuart, Mark Warner, Scott Willett, Will Williams, & Tonya Winbush

RBC Members Absent: Jon Batson

Planning Team Present: Ashley Reid, John Boyer, Jeff Allen, Tom Walker, Alex Pellett, Leigh Anne Monroe, Alexis Modzelesky, Andy Wachob, & Hannah Hartley

Total Present: 47

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME (Ashley Reid, CDM Smith)

The meeting was called to order at 10 am, with Ashley Reid, USRBC Facilitator, welcoming the RBC members. Ashley introduced herself as the lead facilitator and appreciated the members of the Upper Savannah RBC for their willingness to participate in developing a sustainable plan for the Basin. She summarized the purpose of the process and encouraged the members of the committee to stay committed through the planning process.

2. REVIEW OF THE MEETING OBJECTIVES AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Ashley Reid, CDM Smith)

Ashley Reid stated the meeting objectives inviting the RBC members for approval of the agenda. The agenda was approved with no amendments. She introduced members of the Planning Committee and noted that as the Lead Facilitator, she is the primary contact for the Upper Savannah RBC. The Planning team included members from SCDNR, SCDHEC, Clemson SCWRC, and CDM Smith.

Motion to approve the meeting agenda – 1st Scott Willett and 2nd Harold Shelley

3. RBC AND PLANNING TEAM INTRODUCTIONS

The members of the RBC introduced themselves and the interest groups they represent.

The RBC members in attendance included:

Reagan Osbon - Assistant to City Administrator in the City of Westminster. As the state is experiencing growth, it is desirable to have sustainability in the management of water resources. Grew up recreational fishing and swimming on lakes around the State. Glad to be here to protect those resources. Somewhat familiar with the planning process and hopes to use Public Policy and Administration background to the benefit of the Upper Savannah RBC.

Jill Miller – Executive Director, South Carolina Rural Water Association. Representing at-large. Lived in this watershed. South Carolina Rural Water Association is a nonprofit for public water and wastewater utilities. Background includes an administrative role in water quality and source water protection. Also, a member of the PPAC. Hopes that the experience from helping develop the planning process will help guide the RBC along the way.

Elizabeth Lee - Assistant Director, Water Resources, Greenville Water. Somewhat familiar with the planning process. Greenville Water has a lot of people involved in other planning groups, and this is the first one for Elizabeth as an alternate.

Katie Hottel – GIS and Clean Water Manager, Upstate Forever. Representing Environmental interest group. Decided to apply as the organization represents 3 basins in the upstate. Primarily involved in work in the Savannah watershed. The organization has other members serving on the Saluda and the Broad Basin RBCs. Somewhat familiar with the planning process. Interest comes from serving on the Lake Keowee source water protection team. Focuses a good amount of energy on watershed planning and source water protection.

Alan Stuart – Senior Project Manager, Duke Energy. Representing the Electricity and Power utilities interest group. Duke Energy was involved in the planning and development process of the RBC framework, providing comments and feedback.

Melisa Ramey – Lab Director, Water Treatment Program, Seneca Light and Water. Representing the Water and Sewer Utilities interest group. Not familiar with the current water planning process.

Billy Owens – Executive Officer, Lake Hartwell Sail and Power Squadron. Representing Water-based Recreational interest group. Committed to supporting the Upper Savannah planning process.

Carl Price – Operations Superintendent, Santee Cooper-Rainey Station. Representing Electric and Power Utilities interest group. Not very familiar with the river basin planning process, but familiar with water-use permits.

Cheryl Daniels – General Manager, McCormick CPW. Representing Water and Sewer Utilities interest group. Lives in the area. Has great interest in water resources. Not familiar with the river basin water planning process.

Tim Hall – Director, Abbeville Public Utilities. Representing Water and Sewer Utilities. Has some knowledge of the river planning process.

Daniel Milam – Farmer (Milam Farms) from Pendleton, South Carolina. Representing the Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation interest group. Chose to serve on this board because the availability of water is very important for all of us. Not very familiar with the river basin planning process, but excited to learn. Brings a helpful perspective from professional experience.

Mack Beaty IV – Owner, Beaty Farms. Representing the Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation interest group. Serving to be part of the conversation. Somewhat familiar with the river basin planning process but willing to learn more.

Mark Warner – Director, McCormick and Abbeville County Economic Development. Representing Industry and Economic Development interest group. Water availability and quality are very important. Somewhat familiar with the river planning process. Comes with a broad knowledge, including farming, that will be useful to the RBC. A native of Greenwood, SC. Understands agriculture and the importance of water as a resource. Somewhat familiar with the river basin planning process.

Harold Shelley – Facilitator, Friends of the Savannah River Basin. Representing At-Large interest group. Comes with a technical Director of system engineering for large military projects background. Familiar with the river planning process. Motivated to join the Upper Savannah RBC because of previous involvement in the core phase study trying to update the drought plan, which is a critical document for the upper basin. Hopes that the Upper Savannah RBC process can make up for gaps left by previous programs especially with drought planning.

Scott Willett – Executive Director for ARJWS which has the largest customer base in the Upper Savannah – 200,000 people, fairly engaged on the Upper Savannah, PPAC member and helped develop the framework, also a state drought response committee member, large permit holder, water quantity and quality interests, very familiar with the process

Chuck Connolly – Director of Golf, Carolina’s Golf Superintendent Association. A representative for Savannah Lakes Villages residential Community. Representing Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation interest group. Interested in water sustainability.

Tonya Bonitatibus – Riverkeeper, Savannah Riverkeeper. Representing Environmental interest group. Participated extensively in the Georgia River Basin planning process. Excited to bring extensive experience and work with other members in the Upper Savannah Basin.

Cole Rogers – Superintendent, Delux Construction, Inc. Representing Industry and Economic Development interest group. Not familiar with the river basin planning process but very eager to participate actively in the committee.

Jeff Phillips – Director of Water Resources, Greenville Water. Representing Water and Sewer utilities interest group. Very familiar with the river basin planning process.

Will Williams – President/CEO, Wester SC Economic Development Partnership. Representing Industry and Economic Development. Served in Edisto RBC. Very familiar with the river basin planning process.

Tonya Winbush – Senior Vice Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars POST 689/Adopt-A-Stream. Interested in serving, grew up on Lake Hartwell, water is important to our society. Representing At-Large interest group.

John Hains – Board Member, Friends of Lake Keowee Society. Representing Environmental interest group. Not familiar with the river basin planning process. Brings extensive experience from different organizations, including Duke Energy.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. Public comments: There were no public comments.
- b. Agency comments: There were no Agency comments.

5. OVERVIEW OF RIVER BASIN LEARNING, THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK, AND EXAMPLES (Alex Pellet – SCDNR, John Boyer - CDM Smith, and Ashley Reid - Lead Facilitator).

Alex Pellet introduced the members to Upper Savannah Basin planning. He noted the statutory mandate to develop and create the river basin plan. He stated some of the reasons, such as population growth and drought, and their effect on water demand and water supply. He described the history of water planning in the state and the progression to the current water planning framework. Furthermore, he described the eight river basins in the state and why the state adopted a bottom-up approach that encourages stakeholder engagement and participation.

Alex described the five-step process of water planning in the planning framework – 1. Surface Water Assessments; 2. Groundwater Assessment 3. Water Demand Projections 4. River Basin Plans 5. State Water Plans. He explained PPAC’s role in overseeing the process and the role of other contributors, including the USGS. He elaborated on what a River Basin Plan is expected to achieve and went further to discuss the planning framework and the main features of a river basin plan. He drew attention to the 50-year Planning horizon of surface and groundwater, emphasizing drought conditions.

Alex highlighted the four questions a river basin plan seeks to ask: What is the basin’s current available water supply and demands? What are the current permitted and registered water uses? What will be the basin’s water demand over the Planning horizon, and will the water supply meet the demand? What water management strategies will be employed to ensure the supply meets or exceeds the projected demand over the Planning horizon? He presented baseline data from historical figures of water supply and demand in the Upper Savannah Basin.

Finally, he reminded the members of the guiding principles, which include acknowledging that water is a finite essential resource that needs to be made available to users and shared equitably while ensuring sustainability. This can be achieved by the effective use of hydrologic data models and water demand projections in the river basin planning process. He, supported by John Boyer, explained in detail the content of each chapter and planning phases, using the example of Edisto basin, described the process of developing, reaching consensus, and writing a plan.

Alex presentation Discussion:

Comment: Are those withdrawals considered consumptive use?

A: total withdrawal and points to a Journal of SC Water Resources article on consumptive use. For thermo-electric total thermo use is less than 10%

A: (after internet timeout) Chapter 9 includes planning process recommendations

Q: Who's responsible for drafting chapters?

A: CDM Smith will draft and get feedback from subcommittee or broad RBC as a whole

Q: SWAM question – is CDM Smith incorporating the Upper Savannah GA plan and model?

A: the modeling in GA is a different tool

Q: can we use GA's demand projections in SWAM?

A: We can compare results – the models should be consistent and we can look at info from GA and the USACE

6. REVIEW OF RBC BYLAWS (John Boyer, CDM Smith)

John Boyer reviewed the RBC Bylaws. He noted that the purpose of the Bylaws includes defining and governing the decision-making process, defining membership and appointment procedures, defining the method of election and powers of the Chair and Vice Chair, describing how the RBC will operate, and describing how the RBC will communicate internally and externally. He emphasized the importance of identifying an alternate and encouraged the members to dedicate at least two years to serve on the RBC. Moreso, regular attendance is essential, as described in the Bylaws.

Other areas of the RBC Bylaws emphasized by John Boyer include Consensus; Majority – most decisions will be by simple majority; Super majority; Planning Horizon; Roles and responsibilities of the RBC; Attendance and Preparation for Meetings; Chair and Vice-Chair; RBC meetings (as agreed by the members); Special meetings; Closed Meetings; Code of conduct during meetings; Avoiding conflict of interest; Avoiding indiscriminate media communication;

Amending (if deemed necessary) and Signing the Bylaws; Terms of office (2, 3, or 4 years); and Sub-committees.

Discussion:

Q: What does the RBC want to do regarding the schedule to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair? – wait on the Chair and VC?

C: Waiting has advantages – we'll have a chance to meet and get to know everyone and it really isn't a need until meetings 3 or 4.

RBC members agree to vote during RBC meeting #4 for Chair and VC

Nominations for Chair and VC between meetings 3 and 4

C: Ask questions when you have them and that will lead to a greater likelihood that we'll reach consensus

C: The value of the process will be relationships developed during the process so find a way to build relationships and knowledge

C: Councils should get to know each other and become functional part of the planning process

a. Assign Term Lengths:

All the RBC members were assigned term lengths ranging from 2 years to 4 years through a random number picking process:

| S/N | Name | Term (Years) |
|-----|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Reagan | 4 years |
| 2 | Jill | 2 years |
| 3 | Jeff | 2 years |
| 4 | Katie | 2 years |
| 5 | Alan | 4 years |
| 6 | Melisa | 2 years |
| 7 | Billy | 2 years |
| 8 | Carl | 3 years |
| 9 | Cheryl | 4 years |
| 10 | Tonya W | 3 years |
| 11 | Chuck | 3 years |
| 12 | Scott | 4 years |
| 13 | Harold | 2 years |
| 14 | Dan Murph | 3 years |
| 15 | Mark | 4 years |
| 16 | Mack | 4 years |
| 17 | Daniel Milam | 2 years |

| | | |
|----|---------|---------|
| 18 | Tim | 4 years |
| 19 | Tonya B | 3 years |
| 20 | John H | 3 years |
| 21 | Jon B | 4 years |
| 22 | Will | 4 years |
| 23 | Cole | 2 years |

b. Determine when Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected.

John Boyer highlighted the duties of the Chair and the Vice Chair and pointed out the importance of RBC leadership and the need for the Upper Savannah RBC to have good leadership. The members of the Upper Savannah RBC agreed to schedule the election of a Chair and a Vice Chair tentatively on the 4th meeting of the RBC.

7. BASIN PRIORITIES – Break-out session:

Group 1: Tonya Winbush (spokesperson)

What are your priorities for the Upper Savannah River Basin

1. What do you want to preserve, protect or enhance?

-Protect Natural resources for economic growth and to have a seat at the table to facilitate balance between recreation and industry to promote harmony.

-Protect voices, everybody gets heard.

-Protect undeveloped land and to be able to achieve balance between development, industry and population growth

-Enhance the relationship between all stakeholders and interests groups to be more beneficial to the whole.

- Preserve “the blessing of current water quality”

-Preserve balance between all stakeholders

2. What outcomes do you want to encourage?

-Local community has more of an input on the use of water resources -Educate residents and communities on the water recreation outlets opportunity to reconnect with nature and reconnect with each other

3. Actions plan needs to be promoted: Best available science and data to base management. Educate Community so they can take ownership of water resources. Through towns and cities ordinances to implement plans in an emergency.

- Encourage SC/GA further collaboration
- Promote through planning, usage understanding of lake

4. How do you want the basin to be managed?

-Balancing water resources proactively by adaptive priorities based on the conditions of the water resources

Group 2: Cheryl Daniels (spokesperson)

Q1: We want to preserve our lake levels – protect our river basin – balance between resources – recreation, power, drinking water, agriculture, voices

Q2: Explain different viewpoints of all represented to achieve a fair and balanced solution

Q3: Fair and equitable use of our resources

Q4: (managed by) the Queen Cheryl Daniels

Group 3: Alan Stuart (spokesperson)

Q1: protect natural hydrologic infrastructure – reservoirs are highly regulated, focus on areas of private ownership, prevent overdevelopment – preservation of headwaters – unpermitted withdrawers, how do we account for them – balance policy with enforcement – education and collaboration

Q2: cross-industry/user buy-in, collaboration, education – creating a comprehensive plan accounting for needs of many interest groups – learning, documenting, planning in an inclusive way to encourage implementation, understanding what each user needs, plan in place to meet those needs even in a drought, needs vs wants

Q3: identify infrastructure vulnerabilities and catastrophic possibilities – collaborating and incorporating with GA, uses affect one another – advocacy resulting in action for each unique user type – science-backed planning with approachability

Q4: promote infiltration – adequate supply for all needs, users and ecological – pointing out management strategies that intertwine quantity and quality – education messages targeted to specific users, collective, holistic management of watershed by all types of users

Group 4: Tonya Bonitatibus (spokesperson)

Tonya Bonitatibus notes: questions. Make sure the group addresses all four questions, so don't spend too much time on any one question.

a. What do you want to preserve, protect or enhance?

i. Ex: Protect and maintain regional water-dependent recreational opportunities

ii. Ex: Enhance low flows, to minimize impacts from drought

Publicly accessible data – e.g., streamflow (few gages publicly available), water quality

Get flow information from Duke and USACE – specifically flow conditions of southern reservoirs (John noted a lot of USACE data is available)

Equitable use of river throughout basin and more cooperation

Ensure adequate water supply and quality for all interests

Rules for water drainage off of construction sites – more inspections

Protect and preserve recreational fishing (observed decrease in recent years) for future generations

b. What are the outcomes you want to encourage?

i. Ex: Affordable energy and water supply

ii. Ex: A more resilient public water supply

Public access to databases compiled by agencies – (e.g. routine WQ monitoring at USACE reservoirs, measurements at intakes, Duke monitoring program)

Accompany recommended strategies with good tools for implementation. Ability to use federal funds.

Make models used in planning process publicly available

Develop stronger connections between members of the RBC for future collaboration

Remember that we are only half (quarter) of Savannah river so be sure to be engaged with other planning committee

Communication with GA to consider needs of SC side of river – how do we encourage GA to consider the outcomes of our plan? Let SC influence GA's future planning work.

Do not harm to flow, availability, quality

c. What type of actions do you want to promote?

i. Ex: Use of best available science and data to base management decisions

ii. Ex: Actions that improve resiliency, not only from drought but also from flooding

Use best available science

Public availability of real data –

Actions that improve resiliency – get more information from climatology office of climate

projections/trends (more rain in upstream portion of the basin). Should flooding preparation be a key focus in addition to drought?
Help write example ordinances – provide more guidance to communities to help them take the recommended strategies

d. How do you want the basin to be managed?

i. Ex: Balancing all water needs

ii. Ex: Sustainably to ensure long-term availability of water for all users

Equitably with more coordination

Manage fishing limits – what you can and cant take

Manage flow to support fish – understand what needs are. Ecological flow.

Grace notes: Upper Savannah RBC Breakout Discussion Guide (We will take up to an 1:10 minutes over lunch in the small break-out groups, then use 30 minutes for reporting results to the full RBC)

1. Introduce yourself (Planning Team Member)
2. Designate an RBC member to report out at the end of the discussion. The designated member will summarize the small group responses to the question below (all four questions, actually).
3. **What do you see as the priorities for the Upper Savannah River Basin?** This is a brain dump of all priorities and not necessarily a consensus. When identifying priorities, consider the following four questions. Make sure the group addresses all four questions, so don't spend too much time on any one question.

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Equitably with more coordination

Manage fishing limits – what you can and cant take

Manage flow to support fish – understand what needs are. Ecological flow.

The point of this exercise is to identify the RBC priorities for the basin and set the stage for developing the RBC vision statement and goals at the next meeting.

8. Future RBC Meetings

The next RBC meeting will be held September 13, 2023, 10:00 am and will maintain a Hybrid format.

The members of the RBC will decide the preferred days for the monthly meetings.

Ashley meeting discussion

Discussion: Anderson meeting location is good for most. Other ideas?

C: Greenville Water Six Mile Plant, USACE has offices – welcome center at the Thurmond Dam, Anderson University location, ARJWS, Broadway Lake meeting space

2nd Wednesday of the month? CDM Smith will distribute a survey

Meeting adjourned – motion to approve - unanimous

Field Tip ideas – Bad Creek – pumped storage Duke Energy and Adkins WTP, Rainey generating station – 3 mgd

9. CONCLUSION

John Boyer reminded the members to email Ashley if they cannot attend any scheduled RBC meeting physically. He also explained the importance of all members attending all meetings

and, when necessary, the alternates to attend on their behalf. Knowing the number of members of the RBC that will attend the meetings ahead of time will help the planning team effectively plan for all meetings. He also encouraged the members to email any special dietary and other requirements ahead of scheduled meetings.

10. UPCOMING MEETING AND SCHEDULE

The next meeting will be held on September 13th, 2023. The agenda will include a more in-depth review of the planning framework and technical discussion of basic hydrology and monitoring. The members can share ideas for locations for group field trips. Finally, John Boyer advised the members to download and study the planning framework before the next RBC meeting.

The meeting concluded at 2:03 pm.

Minutes: Chikezie Isiguzo and Tom Walker

Approved: September 13, 2023

RBC Chat:

10:37:44 From John Hains To Everyone:

1. John Hains, Friends of Lake Keowee Society, Environmental
2. I have a long-time interest in the Savannah Basin and its water resources
3. I am not familiar with the planning process
4. As I look through the members, I may be the only Limnologist in the group. My career has included research on all of the largest reservoirs as part of Duke Energy (K-T project), later in the USACE-Waterways Experiment Station (RBR, HW, and JST), and finally on the faculty at Clemson. I've been retired since 2018 and remain active in helping address HAB problems around SC. I volunteered to help FOLKS with their interests as a member of this group.

10:42:57 From John Hains To Everyone:

My photo is showing in the online window.

10:44:42 From Thomas Walker To Everyone:

please send it to the team - john boyer and/or myself

11:01:14 From John Hains To Everyone:

Are those withdrawals considered 'consumptive' use?

11:02:40 From John Hains To Everyone:

What are the thermal electric consumptive users?

11:03:23 From Thomas Walker To Everyone:

i'll pause alex in a second to answer these

11:12:01 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

internet went out

11:12:07 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

trying to get it reestablished

11:12:54 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

working to the presentation computer back up

11:42:16 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

things seem to be steady now. if things drop again we will try and pause and get things back up asap

11:49:36 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

break until noon

12:01:39 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

folks are getting lunch so it will be a few more minutes until we start again

12:04:42 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

5 more minutes or so and we start back up

12:31:43 From John Hains to Everyone:

Will FOLKS or other groups be able to get a copy of the final planning model?

12:35:30 From Tonya Bonitatibus to Everyone:

Was that 3 for me?

12:35:38 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

yes

12:36:16 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

tonya - 3

12:36:23 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

john hains - 3

12:36:29 From Will Williams to Everyone:

Tom?? Me?

12:36:30 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

jon batson - 4

12:36:35 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

will - 4

12:36:39 From Will Williams to Everyone:

Reacted to "will - 4" with 

12:36:39 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

cole - 2

12:38:29 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

we will pause the meeting during breakouts. only rbc members will be in the breakout room online

12:39:24 From Jeffrey's iPhone to Everyone:

I am probably going to lose connection soon. Elizabeth can handle GWs priorities

12:39:31 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

ok

13:32:21 From John Hains to Everyone:

Thanks, it was good to meet everyone. I have to logoff now. Later

13:41:41 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

please e-mail me G4 - online group notes, thanks!

13:42:04 From Grace Houghton to Everyone:

I just sent our notes to you, Tom.

13:42:14 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

thanks grace!

13:46:16 From Jeffrey's iPhone to Everyone:

Yes

13:51:59 From Jeffrey's iPhone to Everyone:

Wednesday's are the best. We have staff meeting every Wednesday

13:52:06 From Jeffrey's iPhone to Everyone:

Are not the best

13:54:30 From Tonya Bonitatibus to Everyone:

I like the 2nd thur

13:55:14 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

we may change it to that once the broad ends

14:03:26 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

meeting adjourned