

Location:

May 18, 2022

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Clemson Edisto REC

Hybrid Meeting

Action Items:

1. John Boyer to run analysis on surface water withdrawals for low-flow management strategy threshold proposal.
2. Edisto RBC members to e-mail John Boyer with proposed plan recommendations for RBC consideration prior to next RBC meeting.
3. USGS (if budget allows) to run adjusted groundwater model scenario as requested in the RBC meeting.

Decisions:

1. Majority decision: Edisto RBC recommends establishing groundwater areas of concern in regions where groundwater data and/or groundwater modeling predict water levels drop below the top of the aquifers. Majority Vote: 17 – Yes and 3 – No. (March)
2. The RBC does not want to identify specific groundwater conditions but instead focus on a “desired future condition” approach in the final Plan recommendations. (April)
3. RBC recommends Agricultural Portfolio of Water Efficiency Strategies in priority order of: Water Audits and Nozzle Retrofits, Irrigation Equipment Changes, Soil Management and Cover Cropping, Irrigation Scheduling, Crop Variety, Crop Type & Crop Conversions, and Future Technologies. (May)
4. RBC recommends Portfolio of Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategies in no order of priority. (May)
5. The RBC recommends that responsible agencies and stakeholders consider encouraging new pumping in areas of concern come from aquifers that can support the additional withdrawals. One example indicted by modeling was the area of concern in the Crouch Branch of Calhoun County. Here the RBC recommends that future pumping be transitioned to the McQueen Branch, if monitoring suggest continued, increasing drawdowns in the Crouch Branch aquifer. Majority vote: 16 – Yes, 3 – No & 1 - Abstain (May)
6. The RBC recommends the use of small impoundments limited to 2nd order or lower tributaries to enhance availability during dry/low flow periods to build resilience. Majority vote: 17 – Yes and 1 – Abstain (May)

7. The RBC recommends conjunctive use as a supplement to surface water use during low-flow periods. (May)

Meeting:

- Review of Meeting Objectives
- Approval of Agenda and April 20th Minutes and Summary Documents
- Public and Agency Comment Periods
- Old business/New business Discussion
- Update on Edisto River Basin Plan Chapters
- Review Groundwater Model Sensitivity and Management Strategy
- Selection of Groundwater and Surface Water Management Strategies
- Drought Response
- Upcoming RBC agenda and schedule

Meeting Summary (May 18th)

The Edisto RBC Chair, Hank Stallworth, called the May 18th meeting of the Edisto RBC to order at 9:01 AM. The twenty-third meeting of the Edisto RBC was held in-person and virtually via the Zoom virtual meeting platform. Including the Edisto RBC members and planning team, there were 45 people present at this RBC meeting in-person and online. The meeting began with Hank Stallworth discussing the agenda items for the meeting. The Edisto RBC approved the RBC meeting agenda and the April 20th minutes and summary documents. A public comment period was held with no comments received. An agency public comment period was held with no comments received.

Old and new business began with Scott Harder debriefing the Edisto RBC regarding the recent PPAC meeting and discussion on groundwater management. In previous meetings, the Edisto RBC sought clarification about groundwater responsibilities of the RBC in the planning process. The Edisto RBC will make groundwater management recommendations in the planning process that do not conflict with current DHEC groundwater management plans.

John Boyer introduced the first major agenda item regarding the writing of the Edisto River Basin Plan. Several chapters are currently drafted and are close to release to the subcommittee for review.

The next agenda item focused on groundwater model sensitivity and management strategy modeling. During the April Edisto RBC meeting, scenarios were requested from USGS to inform RBC decision-making for groundwater management strategies to include in the plan. After the presentation and during discussion, another scenario run for moderate and high growth which

combined reduced pumping and relocation was suggested. If the budget allows, USGS will run the model again with the requested scenarios for presentation at the June RBC meeting.

The meeting pivoted to discussion and selection of groundwater and surface water management strategies. On the demand side of strategy development, agricultural water efficiency strategies were the first point of discussion. The RBC considered a portfolio of strategies and after some discussion and minor edits the selected list of efficiencies and order of priority were: water audits and nozzle retrofits, irrigation equipment changes, soil management and cover cropping, irrigation scheduling, crop variety, crop type, and crop conversions, and future technologies. Municipal water conservation and efficiency strategies were discussed and selected without priority ranking. The municipal portfolio included: conservation pricing structures, toilet rebate program, landscape irrigation program and codes, leak detection and water loss control program, car wash recycling ordinances, water waste ordinance, public education of water conservation, residential water audits, water efficiency standards for new construction, reclaimed water programs, and time-of-day watering limits.

On the supply side of strategy development, discussion started with groundwater management. After discussion and rounds of modifications, the RBC voted to make the following groundwater management strategy recommendation: the RBC recommends that responsible agencies and stakeholders consider encouraging new pumping in areas of concern come from aquifers that can support the additional withdrawals. One example indicted by modeling was the area of concern in the Crouch Branch of Calhoun County. Here the RBC recommends that future pumping be transitioned to the McQueen Branch, if monitoring suggest continued, increasing drawdowns in the Crouch Branch aquifer. Other supply side strategies that were selected include small impoundments on second order tributaries or lower and a conjunctive use strategy to build resilience in low flow periods.

The last strategy discussed was low flow surface water management and setting a surface water condition. Discussion focused on setting a threshold in which large water users in the basin would be subject to a low flow management strategy. The appropriate threshold will be determined at a following RBC meeting after analysis on water use in the Edisto river basin.

Finally, the RBC meeting moved to a discussion on drought response. The RBC is obligated by the Planning Framework to summarize existing drought plans and drought advisory groups, summarize drought response initiatives developed by the RBC, list recommendations on drought management or drought management strategies, and include a communication plan. Drought discussion focused on forming a subcommittee, RBC representation on the Southern Drought Management Area committee, and how the RBC would prefer to communicate and will continue at the June RBC meeting.

The meeting concluded with John Boyer discussing items for the next meeting. The RBC meeting was adjourned. The next Edisto RBC meeting will be held June 22, 2022.

The meeting concluded at 2:25 PM.

Summary: Tom Walker

Approved: June 22, 2022