

Minutes of the Edisto RBC Meeting
Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Meeting was held virtually via the Zoom application

Members Present: Mark Aakhus, Laura Bagwell, John Bass, Kirk Bell, David Bishop, Danny Burbage, Joel Duke, Richard Hall, Johnny Haralson, J.J. Jowers, Hugo Krispyn, Alta Mae Marvin, Michael Mosley, Eric Odom, Hank Stallworth, Jason Thompson, Alex Tolbert, Jeremy Walther.

Members Absent: Trey McMillan, Mike Shugart, Jerry Waters, Landrum Weathers.

Planning Team: Jeffrey Allen (Clemson), John Boyer (CDM Smith), Alex Butler (SCDHEC), Rob Devlin (SCDHEC), Joe Gellici (SCDNR), Vincent Leon Guerrero (Clemson), Scott Harder (SCDNR), Chikezie Isiguzo (Clemson), Thomas Walker (Clemson), Andrew Wachob (SCDNR), & Andrew Waters (Clemson)

Total Present: 66

1. Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, and Approval of October 21 minutes.

John Boyer called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. He announced the meeting would be recorded and recognized Tom Walker for his assistance in running the meeting.

John reviewed the agenda that had been previously submitted to the council.

The submitted agenda was approved unanimously.

The revised minutes and summary from the previous meeting were also approved unanimously.

John reminded RBC members to let Tom Walker know in advance if they will not be able to attend the meetings; members who cannot attend are responsible for notifying their alternate. If neither a member or alternate are present the absence is not excused. John reminded members that alternates have full voting and other rights as members; please remind your alternate of this protocol.

John showed members the new "Groundwater Levels in South Carolina, 2011-2018" report is available for review online. Scott Harder described the contents of the report. This information may be helpful for the RBC.

John briefly reviewed survey results for End of Phase 1. He reported most members were able to participate effectively, despite some internet/technology issues. Most members are OK with

current meeting format. Most thought information in Phase 1 was relevant and appropriate. He reviewed suggestions for additional topics. Most want to wait to elect the Chair/Vice Chair. Some were concerned we're moving too fast and did not accomplish all objectives for Phase 1.

John asked members if they are interested in additional SWAM Training with Dr. Tim Cox. Preference was for one or two half day sessions. John will work with Dr. Cox to propose two different sessions starting the week of January 18. Members should look for further correspondence on these sessions. Members who want access to the SWAM model should contact John directly to arrange access to his Google drive.

2. Public Comment

John invited members of the public to submit comments. There were no comments submitted from the public.

3. Water Demand Projections Update

Alex Pellett, SCDNR presented a report on update to the water demand projections model.

Alex reported that the model will focus on larger areas for irrigation for modeling purposes. Current model includes smaller parcels. Analysis now considers 75 acres as a minimum. This constraint resulted in less room for irrigation although the relatively modest growth rate projected suggested irrigation expansion was still possible. Limits to model include future solar panel construction and landowner restrictions on irrigation.

He described two important considerations moving forward in the model:

1. Refinement of water availability model
2. Increasing efficiency of irrigators over time. He recommends looking at future efficiency as an adjusting factor in the model.

There were no questions for Alex so he concluded his report.

4. Approach to Assessing Water Availability

Scott Harder gave a presentation of methodologies for evaluating water availability. The presentation is available as a Powerpoint. Only main conclusions will be noted here:

To facilitate analysis of water availability, RBC members may:

1. Develop Performance measures, as discussed.
2. Designate strategic nodes--locations designated to evaluate cumulative impact of water management strategies. Examples would be USGS streamflow gauge locations or outlets of tributaries of interest. John Boyer will lead a discussion on this topic later in the meeting.

5. Surface Water Scenario Overview

John responded to a comment about availability of information—the planning team will strive to get information available several days in advance of meetings where they will be reviewed so members have time to digest information.

Scott gave a separate presentation on Surface Water Demand Scenarios. These scenarios are presented in the S.C. State Water Planning Framework. These scenarios focus on water demand side as opposed to water supply side, Scott reported. Additional scenarios can be recommended by the RBC—he presented examples of different scenarios RBC may want to recommend. However, new scenarios have to be formally submitted to DNR for consideration. He then reviewed each current scenario (please refer to Powerpoint presentation for details).

Scott also reviewed current Groundwater Scenarios. We will discuss these scenarios in more detail at a later meeting focusing on groundwater. Scott said we will probably discuss groundwater scenarios later in the spring; DNR is still trying to finalize the model, so we are starting with surface water. He thinks it may be April when we are ready to discuss groundwater.

The meeting paused for a break at 10:00 a.m. Meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

6. Finalize Goals for RBC

John reviewed the accepted mission and vision statements.

3 Goals have already been approved. Please refer to Powerpoint for approved goals.

John reported four additional goals were crafted by the planning team and considered by some RBC members.

Proposed Goal 4: Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human and ecosystem needs. Encourage and recognize the value of land use practices that protect water quality.

Richard Hall endorsed the current wording of Goal 4. The group discussed adding “water quantity” to goal language. Richard Hall suggested most planning efforts don’t address water quantity. Jeremy Walther recommended we include quantity if we use the word “quality.” Hugo Krispyn suggested just using phrase “water resources.” David Bishop stated that we may need to address this issue explicitly, since we are setting precedent for future RBCs. Jason Thompson noted water quality is mentioned frequently in SC Water Planning Framework. Hugo reiterated he doesn’t feel it’s realistic to tease quantity and quality apart. He believes quality has a significant impact on quantity. John Boyer suggests it may be OK to focus on quality in this goal since it focuses on land use. David Bishops suggested separating Goal 4 into two different goals. John Bass endorsed that.

This led to new proposed goals:

Proposed Goal 4: Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human and ecosystem needs.

Proposed Goal 5: Encourage and recognize the value of land use practices that protect water quantity and quality.

David Bishop commented proposed Goals 4&5 may already be encompassed in current Goal 3. Jason Thompson responded that Goal seems to focus more on economic development, which makes it the priority in Goal 3. Alta Mae Marvin suggested keeping Goal 3 as currently stated and adopting new 4 and 5.

John Boyer asked for a vote on revised Goal 4. Goal 4 was approved unanimously.

John Boyer asked for a vote on revised Goal 5. Goal 5 was approved unanimously.

Proposed Goal 6: Protect and maintain regional recreation, ecosystems, and cultural and historic resources that are water dependent to enhance the quality of life of our current and future citizens and help support tourism and commercial activities.

Jason Thompson expressed concern that the issues addressed in this goal may be a diversion from focus on water quantity. Mark Aakhus spoke in support of this goal--it is important to the Town of Edisto Beach. David Bishop asked for a description of differentiation between Goal 6 and previous goals. John Bass responded that it's important for beach areas to recognize the importance of historic resources. Alta Mae Marvin added that tourism is an important objective of the Edisto Basin, not just beach areas. Jason Thompson commented that we are just trying to clarify goals, although there may be some overlap between them. Jeremy Walther said that if we were going to state goals explicitly for individual economic sectors, then we need to address goals for all economic sectors, specifically agriculture. Hugo agrees with Jeremy--is it our purpose to call out each and every stakeholder interest group?

Mark Aakhus suggested we combine Goal 3 and 6 but wants tourism and historical resource references to remain. Laura Bagwell commented that Goal 6 is backwards--scope is not primarily recreation, cultural/historic resources. She recommends revision of Goal 3 to include broader stakeholders.

Jason Thompson asked if everyone agrees historic resources include tourism and cultural resources. Rich Hall said he thought they were different. He likes Goal 3 the way it is.

After continued discussion, John Boyer proposed a revised Goal 3:

Plan for sufficient water supplies to support sustainable economic development in a sustainable manner. Request that State and local governments consider and encourage future economic development in areas with adequate water resources.

Revised Goal 3 was approved unanimously.

Discussion returned to proposed Goal 6.

A revised Goal 6 was proposed by Jason Thompson:

Proposed Goal 6: Protect and maintain regional recreation, ecosystems, and cultural and historic resources.

Jeremy Walther said he didn't see this Goal as needed since all stakeholders are covered in other goals.

John asked to hold onto Goal 6 while we discussed the last two goals. Discussion now turned to proposed Goal 7: Identify water management strategies, such as conservation and reuse, to mitigate potential impacts from increased future water withdrawals.

A revision was proposed:

Goal 7: Promote water management strategies, such as conservation and reuse, to mitigate potential impacts from increased future water withdrawals.

A revision was made to Goal 1 (unable to record here; "develop and promote" was added). John Boyer asked the group to vote on revision to Goal 1 and dropping Goal 7. This motion was approved unanimously.

Goal 8: Identify and promote strategies that improve resilience and minimize disruption in supply to meet human needs while allowing the natural water systems to recover from impacts to floods, droughts, and other events.

Jason Thompson said this seemed like a redundancy of other goals. David Bishop thought inclusion of "resilience" added a dimension to other goals. Jason Thompson commented that this goal helps address potential shortage situations. Richard Hall proposed a revision:

Goal 8: Identify and promote strategies that improve resilience and minimize disruption in supply.

This revision was approved unanimously.

John Boyer asked for a vote on removal of current Goal 6. Removal was approved unanimously. John then asked for a vote on removal of current Goal 7. Removal was approved unanimously.

Current Goal 5 was revised to: “Encourage and recognize the value of land use practices that protect water resources.”

Revision was approved unanimously.

Final goals as proposed:

1. Utilize the input of all stakeholders and best available science to develop and promote strategies, policies, and legislative recommendations that allow sustainable use of water resources while protecting the water quantity and quality in the Edisto River Basin.
2. Collaboratively work to engage the public and enhance their understanding of regional water issues and water policy.
3. Plan for sufficient water supply to support sustainable development. Request that the State and local governments consider and encourage future development in areas with adequate water resources.
4. Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future humans and ecosystem needs.
5. Encourage and recognize the value of land use practices that protect water resources.
6. Identify and promote strategies that improve resilience and minimize disruption in supply.

A second vote on a revised number 3 was taken. The current revision (as stated above) was supported with two “nos” supporting the proposed revision.

Discussion continued on revisions to six final proposed goals. Depth of discussion did not allow all proposed revisions to be recorded. Proposed goals are as recorded above. Council voted unanimously to vote on finalizing proposed goals at the beginning of next meeting.

7. Review and Select Performance Measures for the Edisto Basin

John Boyer gave a presentation on “Performance Measures, Strategic Nodes, and Reaches of Interest.” Please refer to his Powerpoint for specific details. He gave a summary of supply shortage measures: Total basin annual mean shortage; maximum water user shortage; total basin annual mean shortage; water users experiencing shortage; and average frequency of shortage.” He suggested RBC may want to consider these measures as performance measures for surface water shortages. The period of record is from August 1931 to December of 2018. For the purpose of this discussion, shortage means there’s a gap between demand and supply, based on monthly current uses (based on last ten years). A robust discussion over the model parameters commenced during the presentation. John suspended discussion at 11:53, noting it will continue at the next meeting.

John concluded his presentation with recommendations on additional strategic node sites to consider at the next meeting. He also asked members to think about possible reaches of

interest to propose for consideration, as well as performance measures. Please review John's Powerpoint for details of recommendations.

Next meeting is Wednesday, January 27 (3 weeks). He briefly reviewed proposed topics for the next meeting. He asked members to propose additions to the draft agenda. No additions were proposed.

A robust discussion continued about inclusion of registered permits that are not intended for use. For the sake of time, John asked that this discussion be continued at a later date.

He reminded the Council that proposed training dates will be submitted to the Council in a few days.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15.

Minutes by: Andrew Waters and Tom Walker

Approved: January 27, 2021