

Location:

May 8, 2024

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Meeting No. 10 (Hybrid Format)

Starr – Iva Water District Office

Action Items:

1. **Parking Lot recommendation – Missing rural wells which has potential for a rural water crisis before urban area problems emerge in drought**

Decisions:

1. **The USRBC adopted 11 process metrics. (September 2023)**
2. **Upper Savannah RBC Vision Statement: A resilient US River Basin that collaboratively, sustainably, and equitably manages and balances human and ecological needs. (September 2023)**
3. **US RBC Goals: 1. Within 24 months, develop water use strategies, policies, and legislative recommendations for the Upper Savannah River Basin in order to:**
 - a. **Ensure water resources are maintained to support current and future human and ecosystem needs.**
 - b. **Improve the resiliency of the water resources and help minimize disruptions within the basin.**
 - c. **Promote balance between development, industry, and economic growth in areas with adequate water resources.**
 - d. **Advocate for responsible land use practices.**
 - e. **Identify funding sources.**
2. **Develop and implement an education and communication plan to promote the strategies, policies, and recommendations developed for the Upper Savannah River Basin.**
3. **Enhance collaboration between all stakeholders and water interest groups, including Georgia and the Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie River Basin. (September 2023)**
4. **The USRBC elected a Chair (Jill Miller) and Vice Chair (Jeff Phillips). (November 2023)**

Meeting:

- Review of Meeting Objectives
- Approval of Agenda
- Public Comment Period
- April Meeting Review
- Additional Surface Water Analyses
- Results of Flow-Ecology Relationships
- Drought Management and Response Discussion
- Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Topics

Meeting Summary (May 8th)

Jill Miller, USRBC Chair, called the May 8th meeting of the Upper Savannah RBC to order at 10:00 AM. The ninth meeting of the Upper Savannah RBC was held in-person and virtually via the Zoom virtual meeting platform. Including the Upper Savannah RBC members and planning team, there were 33 people present at this RBC meeting in-person and online. Jill discussed the agenda items for the meeting. The Upper Savannah RBC approved the RBC meeting agenda and the minutes and summary documents from April. A public comment period was held with no comments received. An agency comment period was held with a comment about hay season and watching out for tractors which are allowed to share the road. Ashley Reid reviewed the April meeting highlights.

John Boyer, CDM Smith, presented additional surface water analyses to the USRBC members in attendance. The presentation covered extended drought analysis by resequencing historical flows to investigate potential future droughts. Three constructed scenarios were used to try and “break” the model which was requested at the previous meeting. Results were shown for both the Upper and Lower Savannah.

Kirk Westphal, CDM Smith, presented preliminary reservoir safe yield results. This modeling exercise is meant to determine the amount of water that is physically/hydrologically available at a reservoir. Safe yield was modeled for the following Upper Savannah reservoirs: Bad Creek, Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, Lake Hartwell, Lake Russell, and Lake Thurmond.

Brandon Peoples, Clemson University, presented *Flow-Ecology Relationships*. The results were applicable to the rolling hills of the Piedmont for perennial runoff and perennial flashy streams. Strategic nodes were at: Little River near Walhalla, Twelvemile Creek, Eighteenmile Creek below Pendleton, and Stevens Creek near Modoc. The selected metrics were: Mean Daily Flow (Fish Richness) and Mean Daily Flow (Fish Species – Shannon’s diversity) and the results demonstrated low risk in the basin for fish richness and Shannon’s diversity.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of drought management and response. John presented the outline for Chapter 8 of the river basin plan on drought response and led discussion on an article regarding last Fall's Upstate drought. Elliot Wickham, SCDNR SCO, presented *Drought Monitoring in South Carolina*. Elliot discussed the Drought Response Committee, DRC indicators, and US Drought Monitor (USDM). One of the key takeaways was that the DRC relates to public water suppliers while the USDM relates to agriculture. John reviewed another drought article which focused on water utilities and drought response. John reviewed a third article on drought in the Southeast. The discussion on Drought Response Strategies and Recommendations was moved to the June meeting.

The meeting concluded with Ashley Reid and John Boyer discussing the next Upper Savannah RBC meeting which will be held at the Starr Iva water district office. The meeting will be held June 12, 2024.

The meeting concluded at 2:20 PM.

Summary: Tom Walker

Approved: 6/12/24