

Minutes of the Edisto RBC Meeting

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

Meeting was held virtually via Zoom Meeting Application

RBC Members Present: Mark Aakhus, Laura Bagwell, John Bass, David Bishop, Joel Duke, Johny Haralson, JJ Jowers, Hugo Krispyn, Mike Moseley, Eric Odom, Charles Shugart, Hank Stallworth, Jason Thompson, Jeremy Walther, Jerry Waters, Landrum Weathers, Kirk Bell, Alta Mae Marvin, Alex Tolbert, & Trey McMillan

RBC Members Absent (Excused): Richard Hall (Amanda Sievers, alternate, present)

Planning Team Present: John Boyer, Scott Harder, Rob Devlin, Jeff Allen, Alex Butler, Tom Walker, Joe Gellici, Andy Wachob, Andrew Waters, Chikezie Isiguzo

Total Present: 74

1. Agenda Item: Call Meeting to Order (John Boyer, Facilitator)

John called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Recognizes Tom Walker for his contribution to organizing the meeting.

John asked members participating together to identify themselves.

John asked alternates attending in place of RBC members to identify themselves. Amanda Sievers noted she was attending in place of Richard Hall.

John reviewed the Agenda and asked for approval or revisions from RBC members. Agenda was approved unanimously.

John asked members to approve or suggest revisions to last meetings minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

John asked members to sign into Zoom with their name so their attendance can be recognized.

2. Agenda Item: Public Comment (John Boyer)

John invited members of the public to submit comments via Zoom raise hand feature. No comments were submitted.

John read a public comment from Fred Palm submitted after the last RBC meeting about climate change. Comment related to incorporating plans for excess water after natural disasters into watershed planning efforts.

3. Agenda Item: FOIA Rules (Van Whitehead, DNR)

John introduced Van Whitehead, counsel at DNR, to review FOIA rules.

The Act was adopted to promote transparency with public bodies. The scope is broadly stated to include most public bodies. Extends to documents related to activities of government. Public bodies can discuss matters in Executive Session but cannot take action. Action must be taken publicly. Executive sessions can be called for: Employment issues, contractual matters, personnel or device security issues, issues regarding allegations of criminal conduct, matters related to proposed location, matters related to economic development. Agendas for regular meetings must be posted publicly at least 24 hours in advance; notice to include agenda, date, time, and place of meeting. Any person has the right to inspect or copy any public record. Requests must be submitted in writing. Public body must respond within 10 business days. Lack of response is indicative of request approval.

Exempt information: Trade secrets, unreasonable invasion of privacy, material that would violate attorney-client relationships, other matters specifically exempted by statute or state law.

Act includes provisions for private parties to sue public body if records aren't produced. If records are improperly withheld, suing entity can recover attorney's fees.

No questions were submitted in response to Van's presentation.

4. Agenda Item: Watershed Atlas Overview (Amanda Ley, DHEC)

Amanda Ley gave a demonstration of the DHEC S.C. Watershed Atlas Website.

The website lists several different types of permits, wells, and protection areas. She conducted a demonstration on how to add data to different levels. Data is also available for download (account required). She gave a demonstration on how to select and save data, add layers and create your own maps to save to your own computer. Amanda invited members to contact her with additional questions or for further instructions on using the site. She reported the information on the site is as current as it is received by DHEC. If you notice information missing contact Jeannie Eidson (DHEC GIS Manager) to get it updated.

5. Agenda Item: Hydrologic Presentation (9.9.20) Follow-up (Alex Butler, DHEC)

Alex Butler responded to a question about graphing in the Hydrologic Presentation from the previous RBC meeting. He reported that mean rainfall had decreased significantly through the Denmark Gauge beginning in 2006. There seems to be a change in response to the system in

the 2000s for the subject site (Denmark Gauge on South Fork Edisto). Drought conditions seem to be a major factor in influencing total water passing through gauge, in addition to land use cover change and withdrawals. Relationships appear to be returning to normal in more recent data.

6. Agenda Item: Current Water Use (Alex Butler, DHEC)

Alex continued his presentation with the 2019 Water Use Report Summary. He depicted total reported water use by county. Use is concentrated in Upstate, largely due to Hydropower production. Hydroelectric dominates water use types in South Carolina. Exclusive of hydropower use, major surface water uses correspond to population centers. Groundwater use is dominated by areas on the coast and upper coastal plain, due to large agricultural and drinking water use. Groundwater use has increased substantially since 2009 due to irrigation increase and increased demand for public water supply. Use varies substantially by season, with highest use in summer months. For total reported surface water, hydroelectric influences totals substantially.

Reported surface water usage has dropped substantially in the Edisto Basin, due primarily to the new surface water permitting act. Farm ponds no longer are required to report, which appears to be influencing data substantially after 2013. Active users in Edisto have increased slightly since 2003. Groundwater use has been increasing steadily in the Edisto Basin since 2003. Again, groundwater use is substantially higher in summer, due to irrigation and well-use for agriculture.

Alex addressed a question regarding evaporation due to higher temperatures. He responded that higher temperatures do influence the drop in total water measurements at Denmark Gauge.

7. Agenda Item: Population and Water Demand Projections (Alex Pellett, DNR)

Alex Pellett gave a presentation on demand projections for Edisto Basin. He emphasized that projections are hard to predict accurately over a long-term horizon. One water use can have a significant impact; if that water use changes, it can dramatically affect projections and results. Changes in reporting also influence projections. Some projections have to be extrapolated from other data sources.

Projections are for extrapolation of trends. They are based on hypothetical scenarios and aim to be informative and influence future planning and management. The feedback for these projections has been ongoing. Models have been developed in house, enhancing opportunity for modification. There have been a variety of feedback sources: Water Utility Council, Water Quality Association, Farm Bureau Water Committee, Chamber of Commerce Environmental Technical Committee, SC PPAC, etc. There have also been technical advisory conference calls where feedback was provided; also feedback from water users in the Edisto River Basin.

Projections consider two scenarios: Business-as-usual and High Demand Scenarios. The Methods report is posted online for further review.

Sectors of water demand include but are not limited to: Thermo-electric, public and domestic supply, manufacturing, agriculture. Projections were based on driver variables for each category. Alex reviewed drivers for each demand category (reference online report for further information). He briefly reviewed how he formulated projections, including different models and sources of data. Please refer to the online report for further details on projection models.

Alex presented results of projections: groundwater and surface water are expected to increase under both projections. He reviewed projections for different use categories by surface and groundwater projections.

Alex will be conducting routine updates on projections based on RBC feedback incorporating recommended adjustments and other potential enhancements.

Following Alex's presentation, John opened the meeting up for discussion.

Alex addressed a question about two high demand scenarios at the same times. He reported he prefers to overestimate demand projections. He looked at other data that suggested high population growth/development did not create a constraint on agricultural uses.

Members requested that projections be routinely updated. David Bishop suggested we plan for high demand and update constantly based on changes in data and assumptions. Responding to a question from Landrum Weathers, Alex reported that he needs to do further research for more accurate agriculture projections. There isn't a lot of detailed information available at this point.

John responded to a comment from Jason Thompson that we have presented too much information at this meeting. This has led to a lack of available time for discussion. John agreed with Jason's comment. John apologized that we did not have time for member small groups and discussion.

In closing, John reported all RBCs are required to use projections, but RBCs can suggest changes to projection models and assumptions or include different types of projections.

8. Agenda Item: Adjournment

In closing, John asked RBC members to read the projection report prior to the next meeting and bring comments and questions on assumptions and methods to the next meeting. Questions based on Alex's presentation can be emailed to John Boyer or Tom Walker.

John reported that DNR legal has requested that we hold off on field trips for the time being. We will revisit field trip options later in the fall, depending on public health recommendations.

He said Alex will be back at the next meeting to respond to questions. The planning team will revisit the agenda for the next meeting to ensure there is ample time to discuss presented topics.

Meeting officially adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes by: Andrew Waters and Tom Walker

Approved: 10/21/2020