

Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie River Basin Council

November 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Danny Black, Kenneth Caldwell, John Carman, Brian Chemsak, Austin Connelly, Leslie Dickerson, Kari Foy, Samuel Grubbs, Lawrence Hayden, Heywood Horton, Jeff Hynds, Courtney Kimmel, Lynn McEwen, Dean Moss, Pete Nardi, Sara O’Connor, Brad O’Neal, Tommy Paradise, Brandon Stutts, Bill Wabbersen, Will Williams, Brad Young, Jeffrey Jones, and Taylor Brewer

Members Absent: Joseph Oswald and Reid Pollard

Planning Team Present: John Boyer, Scott Harder, Tom Walker, Brooke Czwartacki, Joe Koon, Leigh Anne Monroe, Kirk Westphal, and Hannah Hartley

Total Present: 44

1. Welcome (John Boyer, CDM Smith) 10:00–10:10

2. Review of the Meeting Objectives and Approval of the Agenda 10:10–10:15
(John Boyer)
 - Have a quorum.
 - Meeting objectives
 - Agenda approved – Will Williams – 1st and Dean Moss – 2nd

3. RBC and Planning Team Introductions 10:15–10:30
 - Introductions of CDM Smith, Clemson, DNR, DHEC planning team
 - **Table 1. RBC member introductions and term limit drawn**

RBC Member Name	Introduction	Term Drawn
Danny Black	USC grad, SC Alliance, Industry and Economic Dev, worked with other members, need water and sewer in the region	4 year
Taylor Brewer	Beaufort Co, Government Sector, worked in Lex Co, B.S. in Env Science	4 year
Kenneth Caldwell	Own land in Hampton and Colleton Counties, Insurance broker, Left California, was on the California Water Commission, at-large	2 year
John Carman	Was present for the first Edisto session, have more time now for this process, from Nebraska, live in Aiken, familiar with the process	3 year
Brian Chemsak	Chief of Planning Operations, basin is important to BJWSA, Preservation interest	4 year
Austin Connelly	Connelly Farms, manages farm irrigation, represents the ag industry, and has a child due in Feb	4 year
Leslie Dickerson	Works with the Savannah Riverkeeper org, has a small farm in GA, former extension agent, lives in North Augusta, not familiar with the process, MPA degree	3 year
Kari Foy	Hampton, Low Country Regional Water System, services 5 towns in Hampton Co,	2 year

	Design Engineer, Clemson grad, VaTECH, also taught HS Chemistry	
Samuel Grubbs	1 st generation farmer in Barnwell, 2 year old child, interested in learning about the process, voice for agriculture	2 year
Lawrence Hayden	Retired forest service, forest ranger, forest planner, self-employed, stakeholder of the southern part of the basin	3 year
Heyward Horton	n/a	2 year
Jeff Hynds	Department of Energy, water utilities at SRS, mechanical engineering, GaTECH, not familiar with the process, 11 and 13 year old children	4 year
Jeffrey Jones	n/a	2 year
Courtney Kimmel	Research Coordinator for Port Royal Sound Foundation, started work in Chesapeake	2 year
Lynn McEwen	City of Barnwell Administrator, Public Utilities, water is important, MPA from Clemson, UGA lover, 26 year old son	3 year
Dean Moss	PPAC member, former GM at BJWSA, Chairman of the Port Royal Sound Foundation, preservation/conservation interest, very familiar with the process	3 year
Pete Nardi	GM HHI Public Service District, 20 years, buy from BJWSA, 100% recycled water, water reuse, UVermont, WVU, 2 kids – 18 & 14	4 year
Sara O'Connor	Has a 14, 5 and 2 year old, Beaufort native, Law Firm, sustainability interest, working on Masters	4 year
Brad O'Neal	Coosaw Farms, 20 years, Clemson grad, ag interest, water usage fits, grow together in the basin	3 year
Joseph Oswald	n/a	2 year
Tommy Paradise	North Augusta Planning Director, government interest, SC's riverfront, 66	4 year
Reid Pollard	n/a	3 year
Brandon Stutts	Dominion Energy, Utility, wildlife and fishing background	3 year
Bill Wabbersen	Hunting in FL, recreation interest, hunter, nuclear engineer for SRS, retired, UF, Gator Bill, teaches about energy and water	3 year
Will Williams	President of WSCEDP, economic development interest and industry, on the Edisto, USRBC, and LSSRBCs, balance water usage, very familiar	2 year
Brad Young	6 and 2 year old, golf superintendent, Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association, turfgrass business, worked with BJWSA, somewhat familiar	4 year

- Come in person if possible
 - Assign an alternate
 - Alternate has to represent your category
 - Send email to Tom with their info
 - Alternates don't have to apply
4. Public Comment (John Boyer) 10:30–10:40
- a. Public Comment Period – none received
 - b. Agency Comment Period – none received
 - No public or agency comments
5. Overview of River Basin Planning, the Planning Framework, and Examples 10:40–11:30
(Scott Harder and Brooke Czwartacki, SCDNR; John Boyer)
- Water is very important.
 - Surface and groundwater
 - Agriculture, golf courses, energy, industrial, recreation
 - Goal is to plan to make sure we can meet all these needs in the future
 - Population growth causes increased water demand
 - Droughts
 - Go through dry and wet periods
 - Why state water planning?
 - Uncertainty in future droughts and increased water demand
 - History of state water planning
 - Legislatively mandated to develop a state water plan
 - 1st edition 1998, 2nd edition 2004
 - SC 8 planning basins
 - Bottom-up approach, stakeholders lead development
 - eight river basin plans make up the state plan
 - 5-step process
 - Surface water assessments, groundwater assessment, water demand projections, river basin plans, state water plan
 - Planning Process Advisory Committee
 - Developed guidance document
 - Committee members
 - Contents of planning framework
 - Example Edisto basin plan
 - Stakeholder involvement- meetings, field trips
 - Status/ long term schedules
 - Changes to basin boundaries
 - Status for all river basins
 - By end of 2024, will have multiple river basin plans, can start working on the state plan
 - Edisto and Broad plans available online
 - Broad River plan public meeting on November 29
 - Questions
 - Why big gap between 2004 and now?
 - Lot of staff changes, focus on DHEC, fell by wayside. No will to do it. Every time there is a drought there is an interest. After 2011-2012 drought the interest began again. Increasing population.
 - What is a river basin plan?
 - what is the basin's available water supply and demand?

- What are current permitted and registered water uses?
- What will demand be over the planning horizon and will supply meet demand?
- What strategies will be used?
- Proactive not reactive
- Savannah Basin overview
 - 314 miles, spans NC, SC, GA
 - Upper basin dominated by reservoirs, no reservoirs in lower
- Salkehatchie Basin
 - Entirely in SC
 - 3 major rivers, no major reservoirs
- LSS basin
 - Both surface and groundwater are important
 - Most surface water withdrawals for thermoelectric power. Water supply and industry also significant. irrigation, golf courses, and aquaculture also use. Permitted uses
 - Water supply, irrigation main uses for groundwater
 - What qualifies as water supply?
 - Not private use, municipal use
 - Water withdrawals over time
 - Surface water increase then level off, groundwater uptick over time.
 - Could be better reporting
- Guiding principles
 - Water is limited and is major factor in economic development and environmental protection
 - RBPs should strive for equitable use of water
 - RBPs should protect public and balance all needs
- RBP features
 - Stakeholder developed
 - 50-year planning horizon
 - Surface and groundwater resources
 - Water quantity not quality
 - Not regulatory
 - Updated every five years
 - Table of contents
- How is it being developed?
 - River Basin Council
 - 25-30 members representing 8 interests
 - Stakeholder led
 - Consensus-based
 - two years
 - Table of members and planning team
 - Roles and responsibilities
- LSS Surface Water Models
 - Assess water availability and management strategies
- LSS groundwater model
 - USGS coastal plain groundwater model made in 2021
- Water demand projections
- RBC support

- Contractors
- State/ federal agencies- any agency, can use as resource
- Can request outside advisors
- Coordination with other planning bodies
 - Coordinate with GA
 - Inter-basin river councils
 - Will form one with Upper Savannah
- Limitations
 - Not for alternatives to USACE Drought Management Plan
- Stakeholder/ public participation guidelines
 - 3-4 public meetings
 - RBC meetings open to public
 - Draft RBP public review
- Website
- Questions
 - Budgets
 - Can have people come in to educate for free. Mostly have agency staff, academia.
 - DNR pays for lunches
 - Politics, why can't we evaluate the USACE drought plan?
 - Drought plan is federal. They do allow GA and SC agencies to work with them
 - Can provide info about their plan, can make recommendations.
 - Don't have to avoid it
 - Are county managers or zoners brought into the process?
 - Land use and zoning planning
 - Struggle to get local government involved
 - What relationship do we have with GA?
 - Have representatives from GA water planning groups come talk
 - They've done their plans
 - Some relationship, needs to be further developed
 - One company owns all public water access in Beaufort and Port Royal
 - Not focused on that, more water quantity/drought planning
 - Need to get USACE - Corps involved
 - Joint meeting or have them come in
 - They're aware of the process
 - Estimate of unrecorded or underrecorded withdrawals?
 - Not that much because they would need to report
 - Domestic wells, smaller irrigation.
 - Not significant
 - What does implementation mean?
 - Edisto implementation slides reviewed
 - Do models account for sea level rise?
 - SWAM doesn't
 - Groundwater just freshwater model
 - Saltwater is a concern
 - Later iteration could be to plan for that

Break

11:30-11:40

- Let Scott know about dietary restrictions

- Sign-up sheet

6. Review of RBC Bylaws (John Boyer)

11:40–12:00

- a. Assign term lengths
 - b. Determine when Chair and Vice Chair will be selected
- 4 planning phases
 - Phase 1
 - Focus on learning
 - 6 months.
 - Ask questions, participate in field trips, identify additional topics that RBC should learn, select alternates, Chair, Vice Chair
 - Examples from other RBCs
 - Phase 2
 - Evaluate water availability, yield, flow-ecology
 - Is there enough water to meet current and future needs?
 - Critically look at inputs and outputs, request additional analyses
 - Example from other RBCs
 - Phase 3
 - Water management strategies
 - Find solutions
 - Review and comments on draft chapters
 - Example from the Broad RBC
 - Phase 4
 - Develop recommendations
 - Prepare RBP
 - Achieving consensus and write the plan
 - Example from Edisto
 - Important things to remember
 - Ongoing process
 - Not intended to resolve issues with SC water laws
 - Stakeholder driven
 - Transparency
 - GA water planning
 - Similar bottom-up, stakeholder-driven
 - Finished 2nd update in 2023
 - Questions
 - Can you see all of the model or just the results on the website?
 - Results and information about the model themselves
 - Have to understand how the model is biased
 - Do you need a specific software to download models?
 - SWAM training in phase 1 or 2
 - If there's issues with downloading models, contact Scott H
 - Bylaws
 - Describe open process for developing RBP
 - Can be modified. Other basins haven't modified their bylaws
 - Membership and attendance very important. Identify an alternate
 - Members can be removed, resign, and reinstated
 - Term lengths pulled out of hat. 2, 3, 4 years. Subsequent terms will be 3 years. May not serve more than 3 consecutive terms

- Code of conduct
- RBC Chair/ Vice Chair
 - Don't select until 4th meeting. Get to know others, field trips
 - Chair/ Vice Chairs- different interest categories
 - Set agenda for meeting, coordinate with planning team
 - Serve from 2023-2025
- Meetings
 - Regular meetings
 - Closed meetings
 - Special meetings
- Decision making
 - Consensus-based
 - Live with a decision, not unanimous
 - Interest-based negotiations
 - Majority vote if consensus isn't possible
 - Supermajority – 2/3 of members, only for recommending expulsion or reinstatement
 - RBP approval process
 - Draft plan: Rank the plan from 1-5 full endorsement to withdrawal
 - Final plan: support or disagreement
- Subcommittees and interbasin councils
 - US/ LSS interbasin council
 - Establish in 2 or 3 months
- Questions
 - Do field trips ever take the place of or with a meeting? Can non-RBC members be included in a field trip?
 - We've done both before and yes, non-RBC can attend but can be site specific
 - Has there ever been a time when there was sensitive info that the council needed to know but not the public?
 - Unlikely, only happened with proprietary ag numbers one time
 - Executive session, Closed meeting, not recorded, not noticed in minutes
 - Hasn't happened before
- Member term lengths drawn (Table 1)
- Develop a photo directory- picture, name, interest group
- 7. Basin Priorities – Breakout Group Discussion and Report-out over Lunch 12:00–1:40
 - What do you want to preserve, protect or enhance?
 - What are the outcomes you want to encourage?
 - What actions do you want to promote?
 - How do you want the basin to be managed? (Full breakout group discussions in appendix)
 - Online group
 - Protect businesses that are here. Adequate water supply for ag, industry, and municipal
 - Sustainability approaches that work for people already here. Determine best places for ag and development naturally. Develop a water users association. Public education
 - Base decisions on data. Collect more consistent and reliable data. Promote efficiency/ conservation methods. Encourage conservation with carrot not stick

- Common sense, long term, basis on conservation. LS and S combined but different. Quantitative. Real-time monitoring of water levels.
 - Be realistic in terms of economics?
 - Have to bring up the economic aspect of sustainability
 - Group one
 - Protect: water supply capacity to support all uses. Public water supply balanced with ag needs, how they're different and the same. Attract industry
 - Encourage more options for reuse. No regulatory framework. Responsible economic development. Promote maintaining open space. Tree management. Encourage new technology
 - Conservation mindset. What happens if we have a drought? Reduction in water loss
 - Make water affordable
 - Balanced policies and strategies
 - Have uneducated people, need people to be educated
 - Don't want water to be wasted
 - Group 2
 - Manage for existing use as well as predicting future use
 - 3 different basins with three different demands.
 - Interdependence of quality and quantity
 - Demonstrated negotiation among competing interests
 - Manage a limited resource
 - Philosophy of greater efficiency
 - Promote conversation and efficiency, voluntary management
 - Proactive management, holistic
 - Group 3
 - Maintain quality of life we have now. Balance needs now and 50 years from now
 - Increase awareness of water usage, accurate reporting of usage
 - Maintain full levels in upstream lakes
 - Projected to have adequate supply for future demand and more responsible water usage
 - Future studies, promote conservation, protect aquifers
 - Cohesive plan. Each basin manages their own resources. Plan covers a lot of situations
 - Examples of goals and vision statements, summary of priorities
 - Come to meeting with an idea of goals and vision statement
8. Future RBC Meetings Discussion (John Boyer) 1:40–1:50
- 3-4 hours meetings
 - Mostly in person, can be virtual if there's not that much
 - Most people prefer 10-2 meeting time. Preference could depend on travel time
 - People split between meeting day options. Hard to pick a day that works for everyone
 - Current location, Hampton (Lake Warren State Park), Estill Bull Durham Building, other location?
 - Rotation could work so spread out the drive
 - Maybe find something in Hampton for December?
 - Walterboro
 - 1st Thursday would work, in December there's a midyear meeting then in the afternoon
 - Decided on 1st Thursday of the month
 - 12/7 is Pearl Harbor Day.

- Speed test Wi-Fi to make sure it works
- Not all spaces great with audio
- Next meeting 12/7 10-2 meeting space TBA. Will let RBC know where
- 1st Thursday of each month, can be changed if needed
- Agenda for next meeting
- Think about where RBC should go visit

9. Meeting Conclusion

1:50–2:00

Minutes: Taylor Le Moal and Tom Walker

Approved: 12/7/23

RBC Chat:

09:58:53 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

going to start in a minute or so

10:45:43 From hhorton to Everyone:

Hello all. Heyward Horton here. As Tom noted, I got delayed by a wreck that I was stuck behind for an hour; so, I opted to attend online at my office. Apparently, I'm not technified enough to unmute. Sorry!

10:46:17 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

thank you and no worries. we appreciate it

11:50:11 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

15 minute break or so. restart around 1205

12:51:12 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

i'm going to pause the meeting during the breakouts. reconvene around 120pm

13:59:15 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

meeting adjourned

Appendix:

Breakout Discussions:

Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie 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)

Online Group

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 Lower 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.

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*

Be careful to protect the businesses that are here now. Adequate water supply for ag, industry, and municipal.

b. What are the outcomes you want to encourage?

- i. Ex: *Affordable energy and water supply*
- ii. Ex: *A more resilient public water supply*

Some places in the state may not make sense for ag or development, but this should be determined naturally, not through regulations.

Sustainability approaches that work for water users who are already present in the basin. What is the resource capable for the future? Be realistic in terms of economics.

Development of a Water Users Association, crossing all categories of water users.

Public education, especially of school-age generation, because this will become their problem in the future.

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*

Base decisions on data, and to do that encourage the collection of more consistent, reliable data.

Promote efficiency/conservation methods – for example, potential for different types of water users to collaborate, share knowledge (ex: energy providers vs. agricultural water users).

Encourage conservation with a carrot, not a stick.

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*

Salkehatchie vs. Lower Savannah basin – combined for this planning purpose, but they're very different in terms of uses/needs, moreso with surface water as compared to groundwater. Concerns about getting

into details with both basins; need to come up with a strategy that is common-sense, long-term, basis on conservation.

Come at it from a quantitative perspective, in order to assess what the resources are capable of. Then once you know how big the “pie” is, then you can allocate slices. From a physical standpoint, that “pie” and allocation may look different in the 2 basins.

Perfect situation – real time monitoring of surface water and groundwater levels, and usage. Then permitting could be based on modeled availability, and then informed by the real-time data. Tie weather events in. Knowing this information in real-time would help ag users make good decisions.

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.

Group Discussion:

Summary of Group Discussion

What do you want to preserve, protect or enhance?

- Water supply capacity to support all uses

What are the outcomes you want to encourage?

- More options for reuse through improved regulatory framework
- Water availability for economic development
- Affordability of water supply
- A conservation mindset

What type of actions do you want to promote?

- Implementation of new technologies to preserve & enhance capacity
- Responsible development, conservation easements, open space, crop management
- Decrease in water loss/waste

How do you want the basin to be managed?

- By educating our stakeholders
- Policies and strategies that are balanced for all uses/stakeholders

Group Discussion:

Courtney Kimmel group

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO PRESERVE, PROTECT, OR ENHANCE?

- Respond to changing needs – need to forecast changing uses as needs and technology evolves over time horizon; future industry and demands
- Different basins = different priorities

- Salkehatchie – protect water resource for agriculture
- PRS - protect relatively small stream flows – stable
- Savannah - protect water resource flow for drinking water supply
- Preserve and enhance – keep as much water available as current uses as possible
- Users and uses exist BECAUSE of availability of water; balancing historical users and uses vs. future emerging uses
- Water quality is important and interrelated with water availability

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO ENCOURAGE?

- Demonstration of negotiated agreement among competing interests for a finite resource facing increasing demand
- Better informed management of a limited resource
- A document that can go to decision makers to inform planning and zoning decisions
- Promote a stable and predictable future that also promotes resilience when the unexpected does happen
- Build philosophy for increased efficiency of established uses & conservation

WHAT TYPE OF ACTIONS DO YOU WANT TO PROMOTE?

- Conservation & efficiency
- Voluntary management of common resource – non-regulatory solutions

HOW DO YOU WANT THE BASIN TO BE MANAGED?

- Holistically – understanding the interactions between basins; interdependence of quality, quantity, and cognizant of external pressures
- Proactively managing for existing & future uses

NOTES:

- Salkehatchie has two active USGS gauges – lack of flow data could create a major hurdle
- ACE decisions in Upper Savannah directly affect flow data in Lower Savannah
- Groundwater planning will require interaction with Edisto Basin

Group Discussion:

Group 3 Ideas

What do you want to preserve, protect and enhance?

- Ensure the resource is always there to maintain the quality of life we have now for the environment, recreation and industry.
- Balance all of the needs from today and the next 50 years.

- Increase awareness of water usage within the basin with accurate reporting of usage and overall percentage of the available resource.

What are the outcomes you want to encourage?

- Maintain a pool level for recreation in upstream lakes.
- Verification that all drinking water suppliers are projected to have adequate supply for future demands.
- More responsible usage from industries, based on overall sustainability

What type of actions do you want to promote?

- Future studies on the impact of salt water intrusion to affect the availability of usable water in the basin.
- Promote water conservation through all interest groups.
- Protect the aquifers and ensure there is recharge.
- Promote the outcome of the River Planning Basin Committee.

How do you want the basin to be managed?

- Cohesive plan that matches the plans for the Georgia side of the Savannah River
- Limit inter-basin transfers - Have each basin manage the resources they have
- Include in the plan a large number of contingencies that cover an array of situations

Future Learning Topics

- Availability of ground water and how it is affected.