



SC DEPARTMENT *of*
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

Southern Lowcountry IRC Informational Meeting

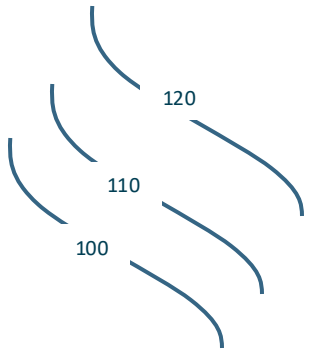
September 24, 2026

Agenda

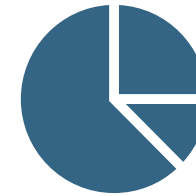
- Welcome and Updates
 - IRC structure and RBC Coordinator Introduction
 - Funding Overview
 - Implementation Summary
 - Funding Structure Discussion
 - Branding and Outreach Materials
 - Next Steps
-



DES Updates



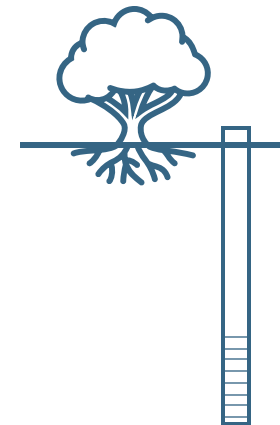
**Potentiometric Maps for
Floridan, Gordon, McQueen
Branch and Crouch Branch
aquifers completed**



**2025 Water Use Report in
draft**



**Capacity Use Area Reports
for Lowcountry and Santee-
Lynches CUAs in draft**

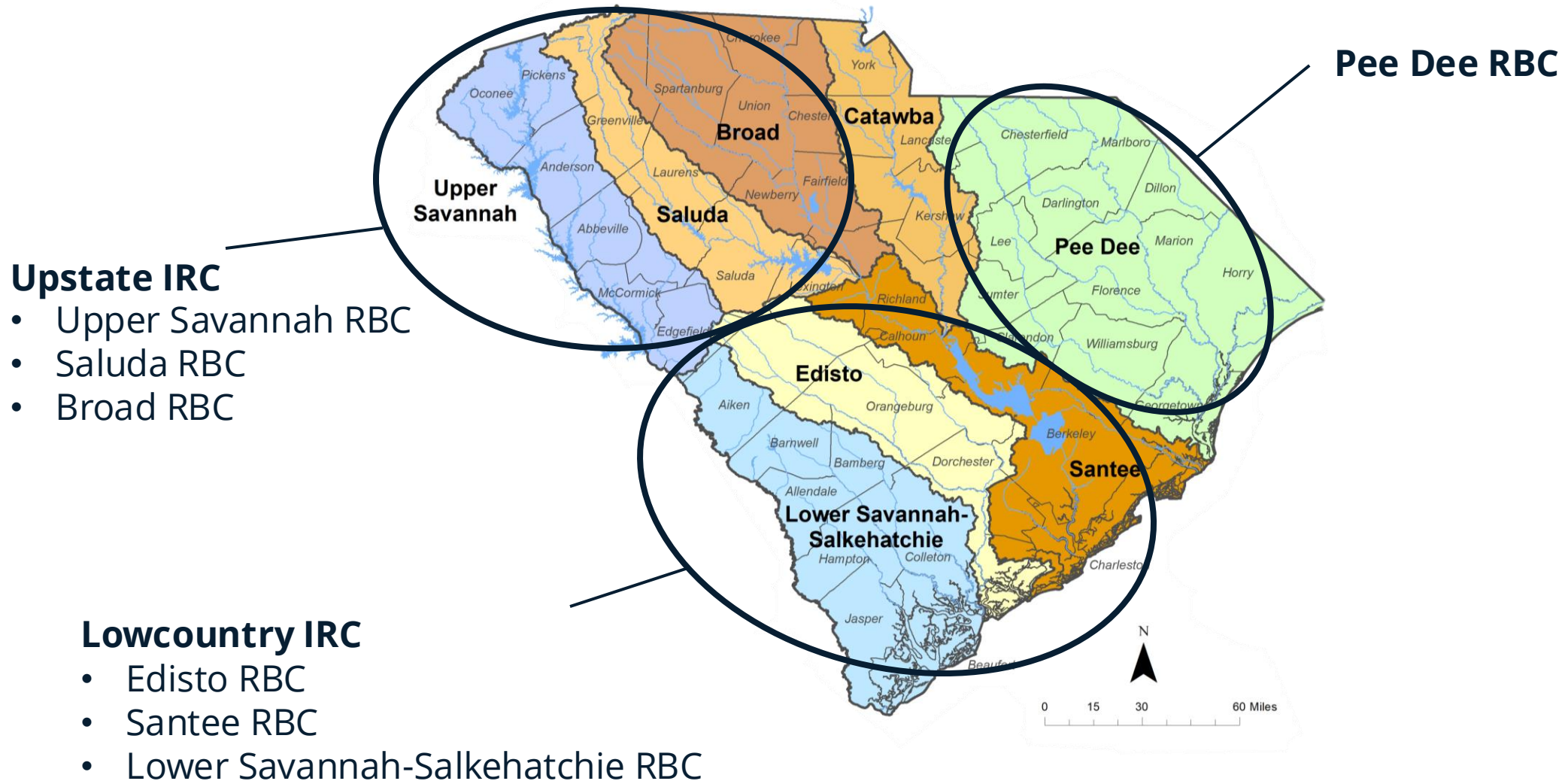


**2019-2026
Groundwater
Monitoring Network
Status Report in
progress**

Inter-basin River Councils (IRCs) and RBC Coordinators



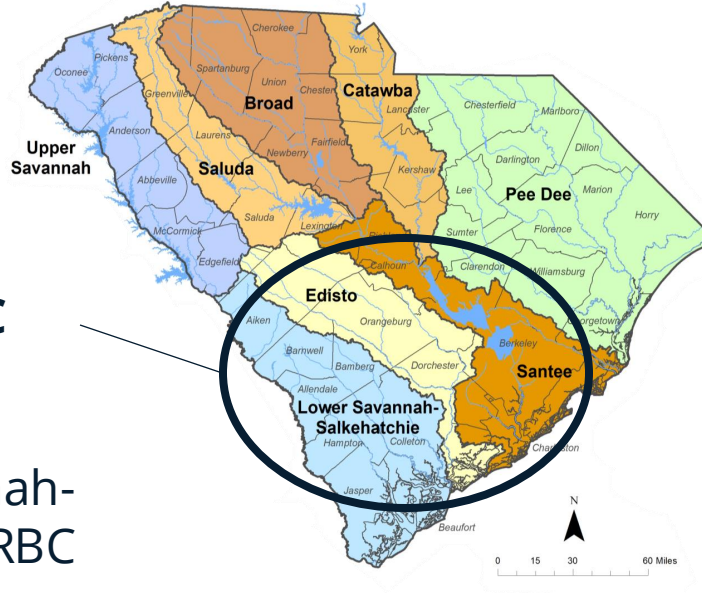
Inter-basin River Councils (IRCs)



RBC Coordinators

Lowcountry IRC

- Edisto RBC
- Santee RBC
- Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie RBC



Santee

Lead: Brooke Czwartacki
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843-619-1950

Secondary: Rebecca Morris
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Edisto

Lead: Leigh Anne Monroe
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Secondary: Joe Koon
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Additional Support: Brooke Czwartacki
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Lower Savannah-Salkehatchie

Lead: Rebecca Morris
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Secondary: Brooke Czwartacki
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WaterSC Updates



WaterSC meeting quarterly

- **September meeting occurred 9/17/26 and December meeting planned 12/17/26**
- **RBC chairs invited**
- **Educating WaterSC on DES water quality/water quantity programs**
- **Funding information presented at June WaterSC meeting**

Funding Overview Implementation Summary Funding Structure



Available Funds Overview

Recurring Funds for Hydrology Program

- ~\$2,000,000 recurring funds annually
- ~\$1,000,000 committed to USGS stream gage maintenance and SW & GW monitoring
- ~\$1,000,000 for Hydrology Section staff and routine program activities including groundwater well installation

Proviso Funds for Water Planning

- ~\$8,000,000 overall current balance across six individual proviso funds
- Pending FY27 budget request to allow spending for general water planning activities from each individual proviso

Proviso Fund Expenditures FY25-FY26

FY25: \$1,897,893

- Five basins meeting monthly and two completing their plans
- WaterSC meeting monthly
- State Water Plan development with contractor support began in December 2024 and continued through the FY

FY26: ~\$955,622

- Three basins meeting monthly and three basins completing their plans
- State Water Plan development with contractor continued through December 2025
- WaterSC meeting monthly through December 2025 and quarterly in 2026

Potential Use of Proviso Funds



Implementing Next Steps and Considerations

Continued Planning and Coordination
Enhancing Data Collection and Models



Updating Water Plans

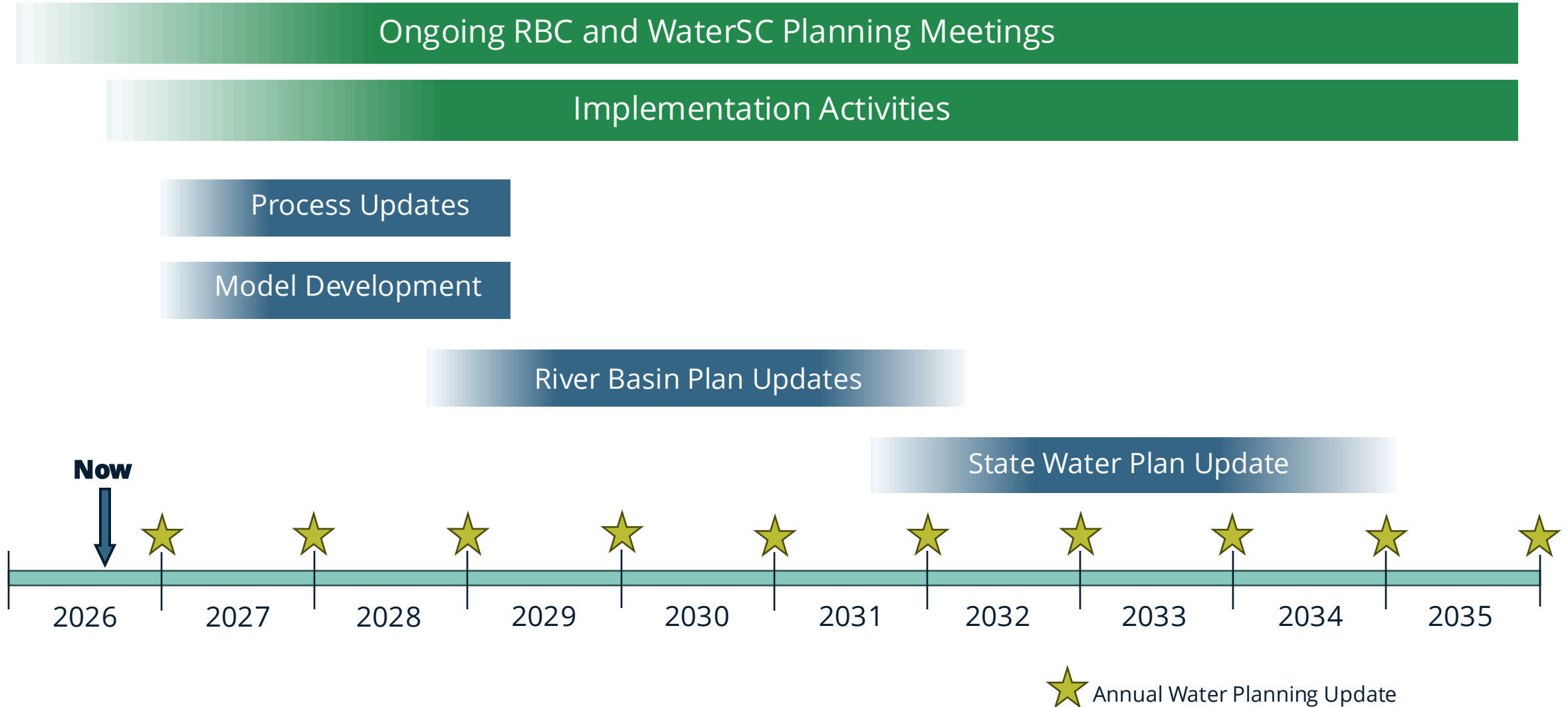


Other Implementation

Next Steps and Considerations

Next Steps		Considerations		
Continuous Water Planning	Intentional Education and Outreach	Enhanced Data Collection and Modeling	Other Planning Considerations	Funding for River Basin Plan Implementation
RBCs and Inter-Basin Councils	Education and Outreach Plan and Goals	Expand Monitoring Networks	Hydrologic Variability	Federal Funding
WaterSC Continuation	State Water Plan Awareness	Expand Ecological Flow Relationships	Water Reuse	Private Funding
State Water Summit	Public Outreach	Other Models	Water Quality	State/Grant Funding
Updates of River Basin Plans and State Water Plan	Legislative Outreach			

Potential Timeline



Continued Planning and Coordination

- Continued water planning meetings, interstate meetings, and education/outreach: **\$1,000,000 over two years**

Action	Explanation	Cost
Water planning meetings	Quarterly RBC and WaterSC meetings, annual Technical Workshop and Water Summit with contractor support	\$500,000 per year
Education and outreach	SCDES development of branded materials and coordination with RBCs and WaterSC	\$0
Interstate coordination	Routine coordination with planning councils and state staff of NC and GA	\$0

Enhance Data Collection and Models & Incorporate Water Quality

- New models and expanded monitoring networks: **\$2,000,000 over two years**

Action	Explanation	Cost
Supplemental Model(s)	Model(s) to supplement SWAM in forecasting water quantity, quality, climate variability, ecological flow relationships, etc.	\$1,500,000
Expand and Enhance Monitoring Network	New groundwater monitoring wells, enhancement of saltwater intrusion monitoring, stream gaging, etc.	\$500,000

Updating Water Plans

- Update of the State Water Plan and the River Basin Plans:
\$3,000,000 as needed

Action	Explanation	Cost
Updated SW models and tech support	Updating and running 7 SWAM models	\$1,500,000
Facilitation and authorship	Contracted facilitation and authorship of river basin plans	\$1,500,000

Total Potential Costs

- Implementation of the State Water Plan, continued water planning meetings, incorporation of water quality and supplemental models, and updating the plans: **\$6,000,000**

Item	Cost
Continued planning and coordination for two years	\$1,000,000
Enhancing data collection and models for two years	\$2,000,000
Plan updates as needed	\$3,000,000

Potential Available Funds for Other Implementation

- Allocated funds are aligned with implementation objectives:
 - Continued Planning
 - Supplemental models
 - Expanded monitoring networks
 - Plan updates
- Remaining funds could be used for other implementation projects

Item	Cost
Currently available funds	\$8,000,000
Potentially allocated funds	\$6,000,000
Potentially available funds	\$2,000,000

RBC Implementation Activities



Summary of Basin Plan Implementation Topics

Topic	Description
Water Conservation	Leak detection, best management practices, education
Sedimentation Studies	Land use impacts, riparian buffers, mitigation costs
Supplemental Models and Data	Rain runoff model, aquifer chloride levels, future hydrologic variability
Additional Monitoring	Groundwater monitoring wells, stream gages
Education and Outreach	Communicate findings, talking points, new programs
Private Wells	Studies of extent and potential impacts on surface water
Water Quality	Assimilative capacity, watershed plans
Flow – Ecology Relationships	Collect more data, expand analysis

Summary of Santee RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Improve efficiency	Improve water use efficiency to conserve water resources; identify funding opportunities and technical assistance, implement outreach and education program; develop survey of practices implemented, funding issues, and funding sources utilized.	Table 10-1, Obj 1
Drought Management	Determine the level of funding needed to support small utilities to update their plans. Communicate funding needs to Legislature.	Table 10-1, Obj 5
Education and Outreach and Funding	Identify funding needs, outline program requirements, and communicate with Legislature. Develop new education and outreach program to fill gaps.	Table 10-1 Obj 2

Summary of Santee RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Work with Partners on Cost Share program	Work to incorporate strategies into land use, planning, zoning, and permitting processes. Encourage Legislature to approve cost share program for deeper production wells. SCDES develop and administer the cost share program.	Table 10-1, Obj 4
Contractor Needs	Perform analysis and present results to RBC. Outreach and education on importance of streamflow data. Seek funding and drill new monitoring wells as needed.	Table 10-1, Obj 3

Summary of Edisto RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Conservation of SW during low-flow conditions	ID funding opportunities, develop communication strategy for low-flow declarations, outreach and ed. to affected users	Table 10-2, Obj 2
Research how changes in land-use impact recharge	RBC to consider incorporating projections into future modeling	Table 10-2, Page 10-7, Obj 5A
Enhance groundwater monitoring	Enhance groundwater monitoring program in groundwater areas of concern	Table 10-2, page 10-8, Obj 6A

Summary of Edisto RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Communication	Effectively communicate RBC findings and recommendations	Table 10-2 Obj 4
Conjunctive Use	Augment sources of supply through conjunctive use by: ID funding, ed. and outreach program, individual withdrawers, develop survey of implementation, funding issues, and sources used	Table 10-2 Obj 3

Summary of LSS RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Water Conservation	Encourage leak detection and water loss audits, implement outreach and ed. program, survey practices implemented	Table 10-1, pages 10-2 through 10-4, Objs 1 A-C
Sedimentation Studies	Incorporate scenarios in future modeling that further examine changes in rainfall and hydrology, alternative population growth scenarios, etc.	Table 10-1, page 10-10, Obj 6B
Supplemental Models and Data	Have contractor use a groundwater model to assess chloride levels in the Upper and Middle Floridan aquifers in Beaufort County.	Table 10-1, page 10-9, Obj 5C

Summary of LSS RBC Implementation Topics

Topic	Description	Citation
Additional Monitoring	Funding to add monitoring wells in deeper aquifers in the central part of the basin, support efforts to maintain and expand streamflow gages.	Table 10-1, page 10-9, Obj 5B
Education and Outreach	Engage GA in water planning, encourage WaterSC to consider recommendations, develop group to lead outreach efforts.	Table 10-1, pages 10-5, 10-6, and 10-8, Objs 2, 3E, and 4D

SCDES Direct Procurement

RBCs or WaterSC propose implementation projects to pursue and submit project proposals

A light blue downward-pointing arrow indicating the flow from the first step to the second.

SCDES will evaluate and score the proposals based on established criteria

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For the selected projects, SCDES will procure contractors and oversee the scope of work

Potential Criteria for Implementation Projects

Consistent with a River Basin Plan implementation recommendation

Basin-scale or multi-basin-scale projects

Demonstrated benefits to water availability in basin

A pilot study

Measurable goals and progress

Example: Projects Eligible for Georgia Seed Grant

- Undertaking **specific implementation** activities
- Providing **technical assistance** for the implementation of Regional Water Plan management practices
- **Preparing and distributing technical guidance** that address management practices in two or more water planning regions
- Undertaking programs to **address critical information and/or data needs**
- Tracking and **analyzing available monitoring data and reporting** on water resource conditions



Additional Funding Options

RBCs are encouraged to seek and stack additional funding for projects



Possible funding opportunities may include:

- Federal funding through the USDA, FEMA, EPA, etc.
- Other state agencies, e.g. SCOR
- State Revolving Fund
- Community Development Block Grants
- 319 grants
- Private grants, such as Google Water Stewardship Projects



Items to Discuss



What shape should the funding take? Cost-share process?



Who can apply and be awarded funds? RBCs? Public entities?



What criteria should be considered to prioritize proposals?



What should be the scope of the funding? Matching funds? Maximum cap?

Branding and Outreach Materials



New Brand Materials for WaterSC and RBCs

Brand materials help establish a familiar identity, enhance recognition and build trust and credibility.



 **waterSC**



 **waterSC**

New Brand Materials for 8 River Basin Councils (RBCs)

New branded assets include:

- Meeting agendas
- Letterhead
- Social media graphic templates
- PPT templates



New Brand Materials for RBCs

Social media graphic templates

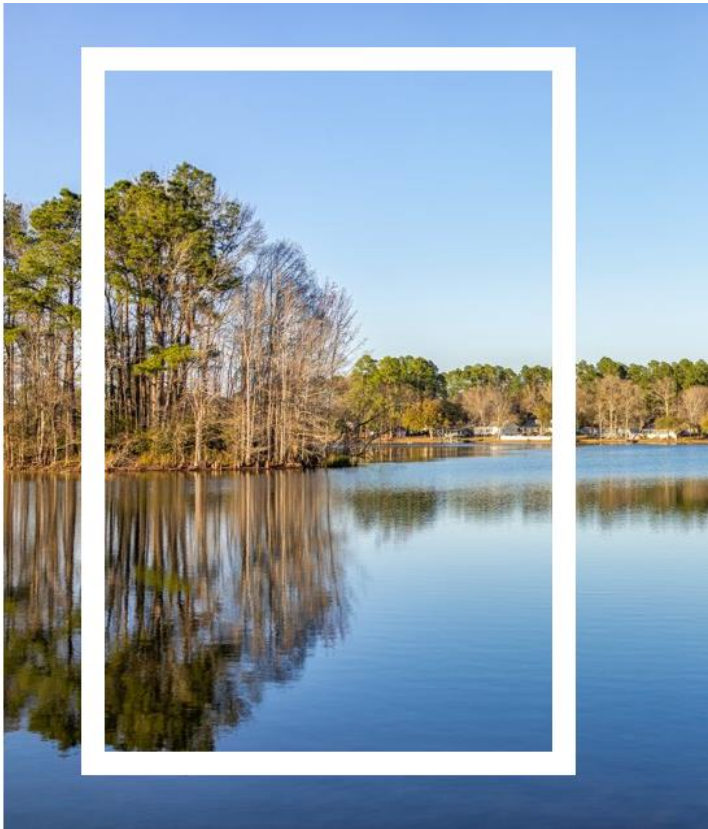


New Brand Materials for RBCs



Presentation
Title Goes Here

dd/mm/yyyy



Meeting Agenda

Location: **Name of Location**
Time: **00:00a.m. - 00:00p.m.** | Date: **mm/dd/yyyy**
Facilitator(s): *FirstName LastName, FirstName LastName*

LOWER SAVANNAH-SALKEHATCHIE
River Basin Council

AGENDA ITEMS:

Start Time	Description
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Additional Information: (DELETE THIS IF NOT NEEDED)
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D-26-0014

Next Steps



Next Steps

- Other IRCs have met (9/15, 9/23)
- Review Basin Plan Implementation Plan Chapter 10
- SCDES will send out survey post meeting
- Meet virtually again to discuss survey results and implementation
- Meet more routinely in 2027

WaterSC Meeting Topics

September 17th Topics

- Current Drought Development and Status
- Hydrology Impacts from Current Drought
- Private Well Overview and Drought Impacts
- Groundwater Trends and Evaluations

December 17th Topics

- Review Annual Water Planning Update
- Guidance Document Update
- Water Quality Standards
- 303(d) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)
- Stormwater
- Drought Policy



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Georgia Seed Grant Funding Example

Example Calculation for Determining Match Commitment:
Grant Funds Requested $\times \frac{2}{3}$ = Required Minimum Matching Funds

<i>Grant Funds Requested:</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>Minimum In-Kind Match Required:</i>	<i>\$37,500</i>
<i>Minimum 10 % Cash Match required:</i>	<i>\$12,500</i>
<i>Total Project Cost:</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>

CASH MATCH: Cash contributed specifically to cover the actual costs of the project. The cash match must be expended to pay for specific elements of the project budget.

These costs **may not** include:

1. Indirect costs
2. Equipment operation
3. In-kind services

IN-KIND MATCH: Contributions made directly in the form of efforts or goods, with dollar value specified, to implement the project. These amounts must be:

1. Verifiable (see section below regarding tracking match commitments);
2. Directly related to accomplishing project goals;
3. Not already being counted as match for another project.