



Meeting Summary

Santee River Basin Council Meeting No. 8 (Hybrid Format)

Date:	July 8 th , 2025
Time:	9:00 AM
Location:	Santee Interpretive Center (900 Stoney Landing, Moncks Corner, SC 29461)
Prepared by:	CDM Smith
RBC Members Present:	Todd Biegger, Sarah Wiggins, Mike Wooten, Alicia Wilson, Michael Melchers, Riley Egger, John Grego*, Jason Thompson, Allan Clum* (Tony Hill and Guinn Wallover), Brandon Stutts*, Jeff Ruble*
RBC Members Absent:	W.E. Mickey Johnson, Jr., Hixon Copp, David Wielicki
Planning Team Present:	John Boyer, Megan Marini, Scott Harder*, Leigh Anne Monroe, Andrew Wachob*, Joseph Koon, Alexis Modzelesky*, Hannah Hartley*, Kirk Westphal*, Chris Whitmire (sub for Sam Quinney)*
	<i>*Attended virtually</i>

Action Items (New or Reminders)

1. None

Decisions

The RBC reached consensus on recommendations related to policy, regulatory, and legislative issues (see meeting minutes).

Meeting Agenda

The following items were on the agenda, which was approved by RBC motion:

- Review of meeting objectives and approval of the agenda
- Public Comments
- Review of June RBC meeting highlights and decisions
- Discussion and selection of policy, regulatory, and legislative recommendations
- Introduction to water management strategies and group discussion

Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 9 am. Michael Melchers stated the meeting objectives and invited the RBC members for approval of the previous minutes and the agenda. The agenda was also approved by the RBC motion.

John Boyer mentioned the WaterSC meeting on June 12th which included a panel of River Basin Council members including Michael Melchers and Alicia Wilson. The panel discussed their vision for moving forward after the initial planning stage.

John mentioned that Google has advertised, through a request for Information, a funding opportunity to help fund water efficiency projects. Google's objective is to replenish the same amount of water they withdraw through funding water efficiency projects in the watersheds where they have withdrawals.

John reminded the RBC what they accomplished during the June meeting. The RBC approved a suite of planning process recommendations, and continued the discussion of policy, regulatory, and legislative recommendations. The RBC achieved consensus on five recommendations policy recommendations and will continue to discuss several placed into the "yellow bucket".

The RBC approved policy recommendations related to the following:

- Revising the definition of safe yield (in the Surface Water Act) to use median rather than mean statistics.
- Requiring (in the Surface Water Act) that all permits and registrations requesting volumes above safe yield (80% median) should be required to develop and submit realistic contingency and/or conservation capabilities and plans commensurate with their requested volume which will trigger at minimum instream flows.
- Allowing SCDES to use alternative hydrologic assessments and take into account water quality considerations due to complex hydrology, as is the case in coastal areas impacted by tides, when considering minimum instream flow (MIF) and minimum water level criteria for new permits.
- Requesting that SCDNR/SCDES review the science behind MIF standards to ensure they are based on best available science to adequately protect designated uses and recognize regional differences. (This recommendation will be included as part of a previously RBC-approved recommendations focusing on MIFs).
- Requiring high use industrial water users (more than 3 million gallons per month) purchasing from a municipal supply to report monthly water usage to SCDES, aligning with existing SCDES water use reporting requirements.

Two other policy, regulatory, and legislative recommendations were discussed, but no final decisions were made. They were placed in a "green/yellow" bucket and marked for future discussion. They were:

- Amending the Surface Water Act to require all surface water withdrawals (existing, new, and registrants) over 3 million gallons per month to be subject to permit requirements and review.
- Re-evaluating review periods for surface water and groundwater permit renewals to facilitate long-term planning efforts, support bond issuance, protect withdrawers' investment in infrastructure, and protect the biological, physical and chemical integrity.

John Boyer noted that CDM Smith is working on updating the Santee SWAM model and developing the Current Use Scenario. Catawba basin outflows reflecting future moderate and high scenario demand conditions have not yet provided by the Catawba Wateree Water Management Group's (CWWMG) consultant.

John introduced water management strategies. He defined the following:

- Surface Water Management Strategy - a water management strategy proposed to eliminate a surface water shortage, reduce a surface water shortage, or generally increase surface water.

- Groundwater Management Strategy - a water management strategy proposed to address a groundwater area of concern.

John reviewed common demand side strategies for each major sector and typical supply side strategies. He provided several examples of southeast area water utilities implementing both demand-side and supply-side strategies. John Georgia's water loss control requirements that include completion of an annual water loss audit, development of a water loss control program, development of individual goals to set measures of water supply efficiency, and demonstration of progress toward improving water supply efficiency.

The RBC briefly discussed what water management strategies and best management practices are currently used in the Santee River basin. For example, Charleston Water encourages low head fixtures, performs water loss audits following industry standard methodology, has smart metering (AMR and AMI) with telemetry within the system to help detect leaks. Mount Pleasant Waterworks (MPW) has a robust AMI system which allows customers to know when they may have consistent use or leaks. MPW also has two ASR wells with a third one being installed. They also practice conjunctive use and offer education and conservation outreach.

The next RBC meeting will be held on August 12th. CDM Smith will present model results, assuming they will be sufficiently complete at that point.