



Review and Refinement of Planning Process Recommendations

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Agenda Item 5

Planning Process, Technical, and Policy, Legislative, and Regulatory Recommendations

The RBC can make specific recommendations at both a basin-wide and state level. These recommendations could include:

1. Suggestions for improving the river basin **planning process**;
2. Considerations for additional **technical** information or tools; and
3. Potential changes to state **policy** or to the **existing regulatory** or **legislative** environment that would benefit the water planning process.

River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Planning process recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to the RBC membership, bylaws, meeting schedules, or procedures
- Ideas to improve communication among RBCs and other groups
- Funding needs and sources of funding
- Improvements to the public outreach process
- Implementing the River Basin Plan and continued RBC activities and actions

Green, Yellow, Red Bucket Approach

- Recommendation needing only minor revision(s)
- Clear RBC consensus



- Not full RBC support
- May revisit to see if consensus can be achieved with revisions



- Minimal RBC support
- No clear path to consensus
- Drop



River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Proposed Recommendation based on the July RBC discussion about **communication and public engagement**:

- **RBCs should develop and implement an engagement plan to improve awareness and build support for the recommendations, actions, and strategies identified in the River Basin Plan.** The engagement plan should:
 - Identify target audiences. Early engagement with elected officials is important. Engagement with groups outside of the “water” space should also be considered. The Association of Counties and SC Manufacturers Association may be a worthwhile target audience.
 - Identify the means and methods for engagement. For example, digital methods including social media may be especially effective with certain audiences.
 - Leverage existing mechanisms like the joint SCAWWA/WEASC *Public Information Officers Committee* and other water advocacy groups to help with messaging.

RBCs should consider the formation of subcommittees to lead the engagement effort. Additional subcommittees may be formed for engagement with elected officials or other specific groups.



River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Proposed Recommendations based on the July RBC discussion about **RBC composition, recruitment, meetings, and collaboration:**

- **Elected officials should be invited and considered to participate on the RBCs as part of the Local Government water interest category.** The Local Government water interest category is one of the least represented categories, and having elected officials participate in the process would add a new voice.





- **SCDES should develop a strategy for maintaining membership and sustaining the RBCs** At least annually, SCDES should review the interest category representation of each RBC and attempt to identify individuals to represent missing or under-represented interest categories. Manufacturing is an interest category that is not well represented but may be important.





River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Proposed Recommendations based on the July RBC discussion about **RBC composition, recruitment, meetings, and collaboration**:

- **Following development of the initial River Basin Plans, the RBCs should work with SCDES to identify the scope of future RBC activities and help develop funding needs and requests.** 
- **Future water planning efforts should consider increased collaboration between all of South Carolina's RBCs.** At least one or two statewide RBC meetings should be held annually. Consideration should also be given to annual meetings between NC, SC, and GA regional water planning groups which share their water resources. 
- **Holding regular meetings for all interested groups statewide to provide opportunities to work together**



River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Proposed Recommendation based on the July RBC discussion about **Development of the State Water Plan:**

- **A Committee consisting of representatives from each RBC should be established to help SCDES identify and prioritize recommendations that were made in each River Basin Plan, for inclusion in the State Water Plan. (see highlight below for proposed replacement)** 
- **During 2025, the RBCs should initiate and coordinate discussions with SCDES to begin the process of updating the State Water Plan.**
 - Initiate discussions to help identify objectives of the Plan update process and formalize how the RBCs can participate in and meaningfully contribute to development of the Plan.
 - **At least one member of each RBC should be included on the state steering committee established to replace PPAC.** 

River Basin Planning Process Recommendations

Proposed Recommendations based on the July RBC discussion about **funding**:

- **The South Carolina Legislature should authorize recurring funding for state water planning activities, including river basin planning.** Currently, nearly all the funding for the river basin planning process has come from the legislature. 
- **A grant program should be established to help support the implementation of the actions and strategies identified each RBC's River Basin Plan.** One example is Georgia's Regional Water Plan Seed Grant Program which supports and incentivizes local governments and other water users as they undertake their Regional Water Plan implementation responsibilities. 

The US RBC will hear from GA EPD Seed Grant Program representatives at our October RBC Meeting.

In the meantime, you can learn more about them by visiting:

<https://epd.georgia.gov/outreach/grants/regional-water-plan-seed-grant-funds>

Note that these recommendations, if they are kept in some form, may fit better in the **Policy, Legislative and Regulatory** category of recommendations.



AGRICULTURAL WATER RESOURCES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

AgWRAP was established by the NC General Assembly in 2011 to help farmers and landowners in doing any one or more of the following:

- » identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability, and storage;
- » implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources;
- » increase water use efficiency; and
- » increase water storage and availability for agricultural purposes



North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

How does AgWRAP work?

The North Carolina Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program is successful because of the grassroots efforts of your local soil and water conservation district. Your district works with agricultural landowners and producers to:

- » develop and approve individual conservation plans;
- » identify the best management practices best suited for your particular operation;
- » design BMPs and help ensure their longevity; and
- » acquire preliminary approval of a Cost Share contract

The division provides administrative and technical assistance to districts. The division gives final approval to cost share contracts and processes requests for payments to cooperators participating in the program.



Eligibility

If you are a landowner or renter of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than one year, have a water quantity need, and make less than \$250,000 or have 75% or more of your AGI derived from farming, ranching or forestry operations, you are eligible to participate in the North Carolina Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program.

To Learn More:

Contact your local soil and water conservation district.

A complete list of districts is available online through the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation:

www.ncagr.gov/swc
or by calling: (919) 707-3770

North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program



Steve Troxler, Commissioner
David B. Williams, Division Director

Best Management Practices for AgWRAP

Best Management Practice (BMP) means a practice, or combination of practices, that is determined to be an effective and practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means.

Agricultural Water Supply/Reuse Pond

Construct agricultural ponds for water supply for irrigation or livestock watering.

Agricultural Pond Repair/Retrofit

Repair or retrofit of existing agricultural pond systems.

Agricultural Pond Sediment Removal

Remove sediment from existing agricultural ponds to increase water storage capacity.

Agricultural Water Storage and/or Collection System

Construct an agricultural water management and/or collection system for water reuse or irrigation for agricultural operations.

Baseflow Interceptor

Improve springs seeps alongside a stream, near banks, but not in the channel by excavating, cleaning, capping to collect and store water for agricultural use.

Conservation Irrigation Conversion

Modify an existing irrigation system to increase the efficiency and uniformity of irrigation water application.

Livestock Water Storage

To construct a system of water storage for the purpose of watering livestock.

Water Supply Well

Construct a drilled, driven or dug well to supply water from an underground source for irrigation, livestock and poultry, aquaculture or on-farm processing.

Interested cooperators may apply to their local soil and water conservation district for financial and technical assistance for the installation of BMPs to increase water storage and efficiency. Applicants can be reimbursed up to 75 percent of a pre-established average cost or actual cost for each BMP installed. The applicant is responsible for 25 percent of the costs.



» Conservation Irrigation Conversion



» Agricultural Water Supply/Reuse Pond