

Upper Savannah River Basin Council

January 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

RBC Members Present: Scott Willett, Mark Warner, John Hains, Melisa Ramey, Katie Hottel, Mack Beaty, Harry Shelley, Jill Miller, Dan Murph, Alan Stuart, Tonya Winbush, Jon Batson, Jeff Phillips, Tonya Bonitatibus, & Cole Rogers

RBC Members Absent: Cheryl Daniels (Eddie Brown, alternate, present), Chuck Connolly, Tim Hall, Daniel Milam, Reagan Osbon, Billy Owens (Don Todd, alternate, present), Carl Price, & Will Williams

Planning Team Present: John Boyer, Ashley Reid, Scott Harder, Tom Walker, Kirk Westphal, Hannah Hartley, Alexis Modzelesky, Leigh Anne Monroe, & Joe Koon

Total Present: 33

1. Call the Meeting to Order (Jill Miller, RBC Chair) 10:00–
10:10
 - a. Review of Meeting Objectives
 - b. Approval of Agenda
 - i. Agenda approved
 - ii. Harry Shelley – 1st
 - iii. Mark Warner – 2nd
 - c. Approval of December 11th Minutes and Summary
 - i. Minutes and summary approved
 - ii. Mack Beaty – 1st
 - iii. Katie Hottel – 2nd
 - d. Announcements and Newsworthy Items
 - i. January 7th WaterSC open house and listening session
 1. Meet and greet and open forum
 - ii. Drought tabletop exercise
 1. 3/5
 2. One day workshop
 3. Info for previous tabletop exercises on scdrought.com
 4. RSVP
2. Public Comment (Ashley Reid) 10:10–
10:15
 - a. Public Comment Period
 - i. none

- b. Agency Comment Period
 - i. none

- 3. December RBC Meeting Review (Ashley Reid and John Boyer) 10:15–10:20
 - a. Policy, legislative, or regulatory recommendations
 - i. RBC recommends the legislature approves and adopts the SWP
 - ii. Increased coordination and planning with GA Environmental Protection Division on Savannah River water resources issues
 - iii. State should support and fund water education programs that include all sectors of water use and promote recommended water management strategies
 - b. Implementation plan
 - i. Proposed objectives
 - ii. Submit comments on draft chapters by next Friday

- 4. Finish Discussion and Development of Implementation Plan (Ashley Reid and John Boyer) 10:20–12:00
 - a. Objective 5: improve drought management
 - i. RBC recommends that water utilities review and update their drought management plans and response ordinance every 5 years or more frequently
 - 1. Public suppliers on the RBC to review and update drought management plans and send them to SCO
 - 2. Public suppliers to consider ways to incorporate RBC drought management recs into drought plan
 - 3. Updates should be shared with SCO
 - ii. Develop materials and outreach strategy to public suppliers in the basin to implement recommendations
 - 1. Develop response actions that are consistent with neighboring utilities
 - 2. Coordinate drought response messaging
 - 3. Consider drought surcharges
 - 4. Submit drought impact observations through CMOR
 - 5. Actions: develop materials, develop outreach strategy, execute outreach strategy, develop approach to track updates
 - iii. State to request and cost-share in the completion of phase 2 of USACE comprehensive study and drought plan. RBC encourages USACE to be more proactive and incorporate forecasting into drought decision-making
 - 1. RBC to conduct outreach to state and USACE
 - 2. Develop outreach materials to educate the area about Savannah River System
 - 3. USACE to complete study
 - 4. Q: how much money is needed to finish the study? A: SC share \$250000, matched by feds and GA, 1 million at most
 - 5. C: a lot of the work has been done, just needs updates

6. C: 50% federal and 50% states, not sure if that's the case going forward
 7. C: most recent water bill allows the Corps not to have a federal match but instead allows local interest to fund
 8. C: forces SC and GA to work together.
- iv. Prioritization
 1. Q: why are we prioritizing? A: It is easy to say that we need to start implementing certain things
 2. 1, 3, 2
- b. Objective 6: promote engagement in the water planning process
 - i. SCDES, RBC planning teams, and RBCs should develop a strategy for maintaining a diverse and representative membership and sustaining the RBCs
 1. Conduct review of membership every 6 months
 2. Invite elected officials of local governments to join
 3. Coordinate with SCDES on the role of RBCs in updating the SWP
 4. Conduct outreach to promote membership for underrepresented groups
 5. C: good idea to get a council of government person on the RBCs
 - ii. Future water planning efforts should consider increased collaboration between all of SC's RBCs
 1. DES to gage interest in joint RBC meetings
 2. DES to plan first annual meeting
 3. DES to execute annual meeting
 4. Q: how does this recommendation interface with WaterSC? Should consider modifying to support WaterSC or maybe it's a duplicate effort since a lot of RBC members participate in both. A: having basins meet and identify areas for cooperation would be appropriate and would help amplify implementation efforts. WaterSC's goal is to write a report and provide info to legislative committees and make sure SWP is done by 12/31.
 5. When Broad proposed this, WaterSC hadn't been formed
 - iii. USRBC will coordinate with groups that have existing education and outreach efforts focused on water conservation
 1. RBC to outreach to group representatives and assess value in having them join RBC meeting
 2. RBC to develop and implement coordinated and outreach plan
 - iv. Prioritization
 1. 1, 3, 2
 - c. Objective 3: improve technical understanding of water resource management issues
 - i. Moved "identify the financial impacts of increased sedimentation..." from objective 4 to 3
 - ii. C: don't know until you do the study
 - iii. 1, 2, 4, 5, 3
 - d. Proposed objectives

- i. Big picture prioritization
- ii. C: don't see anywhere where it says coordinate with LSS or GA. A: maybe we missed it
 - 1. C: do something similar to Pee Dee recommendation
 - 2. Included in the plan as a policy recommendation but not in implementation plan
 - 3. Q: does it make sense to include the feds or just GA and LSS since they are existing water councils?
 - 4. Edited objective 6b to add "adjoining states and USACE"
 - 5. Added action to 6b "SCDES and RBCs to work with GAEPD and their regional water councils to have annual meeting and/or otherwise participate in each other's meetings"
 - 6. C: want to build up the group but also want collaboration
 - 7. Hyundai facility in Savannah
 - a. Original agreement was that Hyundai was going to have a 25-year time span to find another water source but it got expedited
 - b. If SC isn't going to be ready, they're going to be left behind
 - c. We need to hear from them and they need to hear from us
 - d. Question is where is Hyundai going to pull their water
 - 8. GA Regional Councils just updated their plans and SC is finishing its plan so plans are going to be on the same cycle
 - a. Parallel planning going on, makes it easier to collaborate
- iii. Implementation plan proposed objectives
 - 1. C: need number 3 for the other objectives to happen efficiently
 - 2. C: hesitant to further prioritize
 - 3. C: don't understand this part. Not sure prioritizing this part actually creates results
 - 4. C: work is going to be done in the individual strategies
 - 5. Going to do things in parallel
 - 6. Q: can we prioritize by cost to implement for amount of time? Ease vs difficulty
 - 7. Have a budget range for actions/ strategies
 - 8. Broad RBC example
 - 9. C: they're all important
 - 10. Write up justifications based on discussion
 - 11. RBC elected to not prioritize the overall objectives
 - 12. C: Maybe in executive summary, identify and make sure we're putting measures in place to ensure viability in case something goes wrong. A: will talk about that in chapter 7
- e. Progress metrics
 - i. Benchmark used to monitor the success or failure of an action taken by an RBC
 - ii. More appropriate for implementation activities
 - iii. Proposed progress metrics
 - 1. Improve water use efficiency to conserve water resources

- a. (1a) Municipal and agricultural water conservation and efficiency strategies are considered, evaluated and implemented. 5-year reduction in residential per capita demand is realized and water utility financial strength is maintained
- b. (1b) Funding opportunities are identified and used to implement strategies
- c. C: this is a progress metric since it is visible, can't be a progress metric if internal
- d. C: not very reflective
- e. C: tried to normalize water use
- f. C: goal should be to identify those who are not at the standard
- g. C: appliances are more efficient than they were before (toilet, shower, washing machine, dishwasher), similar pattern with agriculture
- h. C: society is going to tell us what kind of truck to drive
- i. Hard objective to meet because it's hard to collect the data. Some utilities can provide some cant
- j. Leak detection and water loss control programs were a second priority
- k. Couldn't come up with a useful metric in ag since it is so small
- l. Q: are we required to have a baseline
- m. Changed metric 1a to "a baseline water loss/leak detection measure is established for water utilities and improvement is seen over 5 years"
- n. Q: does that have to be included in the implementation plan? A: we would need to add a specific action
- o. C: specific action would make it easier to get 319 funding
- p. Added "encourage water utilities to conduct a water loss/leak detection audit using AWWA M36 Method, establish a baseline, and continue to measure every 2-3 years" to 5-year actions
- q. C: utilities don't bill per unit; we allocate cost. Methodology is simple but not common
- r. Changed metric 1a to "water utilities establish a baseline water loss/leak detection measure and improvement is seen over 5 years in subsequent surveys"
- s. C: start the process by being aware
- t. C: missing something: water utilities that are paying attention are motivated by the cost of doing business. A: don't charge for water. Minimizing operations costs
 - i. A: only true for your situation, majority of utilities don't have their own source

- u. C: sounds like you have the software to do loss detection measures. More time needed for the smaller municipalities to be able to do it
 - v. Added “identify funding opportunities and technical assistance” to 5-year actions
 - w. Changed 1b to “Funding opportunities and technical assistance are identified and used to implement conservation strategies”
2. Communicate, coordinate, and promote findings and recommendations from RBP
- a. (2a) RBC has developed an engagement plan within 1 year following completion of the plan
 - b. (2b) outreach is effective, prompting legislative actions, decisions, and funding that support implementation strategies and actions
 - c. Engagement plan is easy metric to measure
 - d. Q: are we saying outreach is in one year or is there a timeframe? A: didn’t have a timeframe, probably should. Maybe annual review
 - e. Q: how do you measure effectiveness? A: whether there’s legislative actions or decisions as a result. Measure what outreach each sector is doing, convince legislature to do something like SEED grant
 - f. Edited 2b “outreach leads to legislative actions, decisions, and funding that support implementation strategies and actions”
 - g. Q: does legislature mean state or federal or can it also mean local? A: added local
3. Improve technical understanding of water resource management issues
- a. (3a) water quality issues and concerns in the basin are identified and a strategy to study approaches to address them is developed
 - b. (3b) USGS streamflow gages in the basin are maintained
 - c. (3c) the impact of potential, future land use changes on water resources quantity and streamflow characteristics are determined and a method for prioritizing areas for land conservation is developed
 - d. (3d) the financial impact of sedimentation on reservoirs and water resources is identified
 - e. Figure out what are the most important water quality issues. measure
 - f. Q: jumping from quantity to quality? A: previously discussed plans
 - g. Q: did we put a timeline on it? A: no, these are ongoing. Look at progress annually

- h. Q: are we going to say that in the plan? A: yes, when we write this section of chapter 10
- i. A: add way to measure progress
- j. Q: is this talking about understanding for state or locals? Should improve access to data so that local municipalities can understand it more easily? A: Data accessibility isn't a progress metric
- k. C: could be a certain percentage of data is publicly available. A: Could be under 3a
- l. Added 3e: 100% of data is available
- m. Objective 3 only covers local technical measures
- n. Q: recommended adding new stream flow gauges but metric only measures what's already in place. Is that enough of a metric? A: added "and increased if SCDES recommends as such" to 3b
- o. We didn't make a recommendation specific to adding non-USGS stream gauges. Talked about Bridge Boxes, not as good data
- p. In discussions, didn't identify the specific need for additional, not as rigorous flow data
- q. Q: 3c, discussion mentioned guiding future developments. Is that an additional metric or adding on? A: kept as this to take baby steps
- r. C: we're focused on water and we should be looking at things that are necessary to protect water. Shouldn't try to get into development
- s. Q: would it be more beneficial to create a checklist of considerations to give to developers?
- t. C: we should stay in our lane
- u. Added "and applied" to 3c

Lunch

12:00–12:20

5. Progress Metrics

- a. Improve technical understanding of water resource management issues
 - i. 3d
 1. A lot of it depends on Corps surveys- hard to get data
 2. Planning on doing full bathymetric studies but not sure of frequency
 3. Not just Corps reservoirs, it's all reservoirs
 4. C: Could say impacts instead of financial A: Broad said that financial impact would make local governments care more
 5. C: this metric moves us forward more
 6. Leaving this metric in makes it a 319 metric
 7. kept

- b. Protect water resources
 - i. (4a) the primary sources of sediment loading to reservoirs are identified
 - ii. (4b) measures are put in place by local governments to prevent sediment loading to reservoirs
 - iii. C: 4a is asking what are the sources
 - iv. Do you think there is need for additional study to identify primary sources?
 - v. C: Implies that you have measured where most of the sediment is coming from. A: thinking more processes and types of land
 - vi. Catawba has done modeling
 - vii. 4b is a long-term metric
- c. Improve drought management
 - i. (5a) 100% of public water suppliers' drought management plans are updated within the last 5 years and updated to the SCO for review
 - ii. (5b) state funding is designated to complete phase 2 of the USACE comprehensive study and drought plan update
 - iii. Look at 5a annually to see if the plans are 5 years older or less
- d. Promote engagement in the water planning process
 - i. (6a) RBCs continue beyond 2025 with a diverse and representative membership
 - ii. (6b) coordination occurs with groups that have existing education and outreach efforts focused on water conservation
 - iii. C: be more specific, at least 90% of the seats are filled
 - iv. Added "active" to 6a
 - v. C: hope to recruit new people
 - vi. C: hope that RBC can be a starting point where more people are aware
 - vii. Q: to alleviate the issue with some of the overallocations there would be negotiations within a watershed. A: state would still be the final governing body
 - viii. Q: are your development authorities going to the municipalities before they lock in on agreements? A: yes
 - ix. Added "90% seats filled" to 6a
 - x. C: Some people's terms are almost up
 - xi. C: needs to be a metric that measures engagement between the Saluda/ Broad/ GA
 - xii. Added (6c) collaboration has occurred with other RBCs, GA, and USACE. At least one meeting with each entity has occurred annually
 - xiii. End of chapter 10
 - xiv. Also have long term goals and objectives
 - xv. Send out draft of chapter 10 in 2 weeks

- 6. Review of Draft Chapters 7, 8, and 9 (Ashley Reid and John Boyer) 12:20–1:50
 - a. The RBC discourages the use of decreasing block rate structures by water providers (wasn't officially voted on) (chapter 8)
 - i. NC doesn't allow it if they're getting state funding

- ii. C: don't want to discourage water systems from negotiating with wholesale. Some wholesalers have better rates than customers
- iii. C: would be helpful for local utilities
- iv. C: good idea to get state revolving loan funds
- v. C: good idea to adopt NC's stance
- vi. Added "The RBC encourages SC to adopt a policy that makes funding availability contingent on not having a decreasing block rate structure"
- vii. C: ok with not applying this to industrial customers
- viii. Remove NC example
- b. Drought triggers narrative (chapter 8)
 - i. Corps gradually changed what was in the 2012 plan
 - 1. Level 2: when less than 10%, they go to a daily average
- c. Chapter 7
 - i. Reaching out to manufacturing contacts
- d. Chapter 9

7. Upcoming Meeting Schedule (Ashley Reid and John Boyer) 1:50–2:00
- a. Plan to have chapter 10 done and whole draft by February
 - b. Spend time going through the log
 - c. Vote on plan in March
 - d. Public meeting late March/ early April
 - e. May not need to meet in person since just reviewing comments
 - f. Need to review executive summary very closely
 - g. Plan on meeting in person in Feb
 - h. Decide after February meeting what we're going to do for March
 - i. Adaptive management
 - j. Q: Are RBCs taking ownership of implementation, or are you still facilitating? A: up to DES, needs to be figured out
 - k. C: think about how you present adaptive management to the public. A: have a couple members present to the public
 - l. Q: where will the public meetings be? A: slightly larger building
 - m. Thank you for your efforts!

Meeting adjourned: 1:48 PM

Minutes: Taylor Le Moal and Tom Walker
 Approved: 2/12/25

RBC Chat:


10:09:38 From Melissa Griffin to Everyone:
<http://scdrought.com/planning.html>

10:09:51 From Melissa Griffin to Everyone:
 Information and reports on 2017 and 2019 TTX


10:10:05 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
thank you!

10:11:23 From Melissa Griffin to Everyone:
MizzellH@dnr.sc.gov or GriffinM@dnr.sc.gov

11:14:33 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
10 min break - 11:25

11:15:00 From Tonya Winbush ~ USRBC to Everyone:


12:26:48 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
break for lunch until 12:45ish

12:26:50 From Tonya Winbush ~ USRBC to Everyone:


12:46:23 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
will get started back up here in a minute

13:48:59 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:
meeting adjourned