

Minutes
Environmental Protection Committee
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

March 24, 2009

Attending:

Committee Members

Walter Hudson, Chairman
Earl Barrs
Warren Budd
Phyllis Johnson
Ray Lambert
Jim Walters
Philip Watt
Tom Wheeler
Bill Carruth, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

David Allen
Bill Archer
Gene Bishop
Jenny Lynn Bradley
Joe Hatfield
Mabel Jenkins
Bob Rutland
Loyce Turner
Jim Tysinger

Visitors

Thomas Farmer, The Nature Conservancy
Shana Udvardy, The Georgia Conservancy
Bettie Sleeth, Home Builders Association of Georgia
Katie Kirkpatrick, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Andrew Schock, The Conservation Fund
Michelle Cable, The Nature Conservancy
Andy Fleming, Friends of Georgia State Parks

Staff Members

Noel Holcomb
Chris Clark
Carol Couch
Susan Shipman
Steve Friedman
Dan Forster
Marlin Gottschalk
Becky Kelley
Ray Luce
Jim Ussery
Karl Burgess
Linda MacGregor
David Crass
Todd Holbrook
Doralyn Kirkland
Wally Woods
Steve Saunders
Connie Buck
John Bowers
John Thompson
Sally Winchester
Paul Nelson
Brad Gane
Sherry Crew-Jay
Emily Hitchcock
Lauren Curry
Sarah Dearman
Mary Ann Evans
Hellen Harris

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Skin Edge, Allied Golf

Jim Scarbrough, Gwinnett County Water

Phil Zinsmeister, Sierra Club

Ronny Just, Georgia Power Company

Graham Holden, Jones Day

Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council

Nathaniel Hunt, Southern Environmental Law Center

The March 24, 2009 meeting of the Environmental Protection Committee was called to order by Board Chairman Bill Carruth.

Chairman Carruth called on Walter Hudson, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee.

Mr. Hudson called on Linda MacGregor, Chief, Watershed Protection Branch, Environmental Protection Division (EPD), to give a briefing on Proposed Rules Pertaining to Water Conservation Permitting.

Ms. MacGregor stated that the proposed rule would amend water conservation and reporting requirements to comply with The Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan (State Water Plan). She further stated that EPD currently requires water conservation plans and reporting for non-farm water permits, and that the proposed rule would amend permitting rules to require demonstration of progress toward water conservation goals and require inclusion of this information in annual reports.

She stated that stakeholder meetings were targeted for April and May 2009, a strawman report would be made available to the public for comment during the summer, and revised proposed amendments would be presented to the Board in September. She further stated that in October, proposed revisions to the rule would be made available to the public and public hearings would be held. She added that the final proposed rule would be presented to the Board for action in December 2009.

Mr. Wheeler asked if withdrawal of 100,000 gallons of water a day was the amount that triggers compliance with the permitting rule.

Ms. MacGregor stated that 100,000 gallons per day was correct.

Dr. Couch, Director of EPD, stated that the framework for the proposed rules originated from the State Water Plan, two executive orders by Governor Perdue, and the development of an important resource document called the Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP). She further stated that the WCIP highlights six sectors of water use within the state involving agriculture, golf, industry, municipal uses, state facilities and energy users of water. She added that teams of individuals from these sectors were formed to focus on efficiency, costs, and best practices for water conservation. She further added that input from these sectors and formal public comments had resulted in a revision of the WCIP, which would be presented to the public for review within the next few weeks.

She stated that she felt that the proposed WCIP is a resource document with a high degree of input and consensus from the public and industry sectors, which would stand as a firm foundation for future rule making for water conservation. She further

stated that the WCIP was not a rule and was not designed to be a rule, but a plan which focuses on voluntary and best management practices to be incorporated in a cost effective way.

Mr. Hudson called on Bryan Tolar of the Georgia Agribusiness Council.

Mr. Tolar called attention to a handout from the Georgia Agribusiness Council (GAC) stating concerns and questions regarding the WCIP. He expressed appreciation to Dr. Couch for including GAC in the stakeholder process for developing the proposed WCIP and stated that the presentation by Ms. MacGregor and comments by Dr. Couch had answered to his satisfaction each question presented in the handout. He further stated that agriculture and agribusiness involve more than farm permitting and landscape water use, that each involves everything that it takes to move the product from the farm to the consumer. He added that he looks forward to continued involvement in the stakeholder process as the WCIP moves forward. He further added that he views the Plan as an excellent tool to help regional water councils achieve water conservation goals. (Letter attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Dr. Couch stated that the regional water councils, made up of 300 state leaders, held their first meeting on March 13, 2009, and received their charge from Governor Perdue. She further stated that she would give a briefing in May 2009 on the progress of the regional water councils' efforts to find solutions to water supply, stability and water quality across the state.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.