



Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Water Quantity Committee Report April 19, 2011

LFO Water Quantity Committee

- Jimmy Webb, Chair
- Steve Bailey
- John Bridges
- Jimmy Champion
- Hal Haddock
- Gary Leddon
- Chris Hobby
- George McIntosh
- Doyle Medders
- T.E. Moye
- Greg Murray
- Mike Newberry
- Richard Royal
- Howard Small



Committee Meetings

- March 11th: Meeting with USFWS (summary in pre-meeting packet, pages 23-24)
- March 15th: Meeting summary in pre-meeting packet (pages 25-31)
- April 15th: Meeting summary hand-out
- Discussed ESA issues, plan revisions, and finalizing draft plan
- Developed recommendations to Council for today's meeting



Plan Revisions to Address Endangered Species Act Issues

- Footnote #7 on page 2-5 references discussion and Council recommendation on ESA issues in other parts of plan
- PAGE 6-2: Committee recommends adoption of Option 2
- PAGE 7-16: Committee recommends adoption of Option 2, except for the 2nd sentence, which should read:
“The Council urges all appropriate state agencies to join in this process, including the EPD.”
- Committee recommends adoption of these revisions



Gap Language

PAGES 5-8 & 5-9: Committee recommends a new alternative:

The Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Council questions whether the criteria used to determine “gaps” for surface water flows (as defined in the resource assessment models) are appropriate metrics by which to evaluate the impacts of consumptive water use on the state’s water resources. The “gaps” do not provide for reasonable use by lawfully permitted users. Moreover, the “gaps” are not defined in terms of any demonstrable environmental harm. The Council disagrees with the approach to identifying “gaps” used in this planning process because:

- (a) a gap is not defined by impacts on aquatic health or downstream users;
- (b) it is not clear what the impacts of a gap are;
- (c) gaps occur as a result of use that has already been legally permitted in the region;
and
- (d) the modeled gap cannot be closed through demand management even with complete cessation of consumptive water use when a gap occurs.

Moreover, assumptions used in the resource assessment model regarding upstream withdrawals for reservoirs result in a gap that is overestimated relative to actual use.

Closing the identified “gaps” could ultimately cause significant harm to the region’s economy and would be counter to the Council’s Visions and Goals (i.e., supporting the region’s economy, ensuring access to water resources for existing and future water users, maintaining the production-agriculture-based economy of the region, and supporting sustainable economic growth in the region). Therefore, the Council insists that no modifications to existing water withdrawal permitting practices be enacted based on the resource assessment model results. The Council recommends additional study to determine more appropriate flow targets that account for permitted reasonable use and demonstrable environmental impacts for use in future planning.

Gap Language (cont.)

- Clarification of gaps throughout plan as model results (“gap identified by the model”)
- PAGE 7-15: Last bullet item added:

The Council recommends that no modifications to existing water withdrawal permitting practices be enacted based on the surface water availability and groundwater availability resource assessment model results. For a more complete discussion of the Council’s concerns with the modeling approaches and results, please see page 5-6.

- Committee recommends adoption of these revisions



Interbasin Transfer

- PAGE 7-15: 3rd bullet item - Added new last sentence:

However, the Council recommends against any new interbasin transfers from any basin for which this planning process identified concerns about maintaining a sustainable in-stream flow regime.

- Committee recommends adoption of this revision (as presented in April 12th review draft)



New Groundwater Results

- Recalibration of models increased sustainable yield ranges for Claiborne
 - Tables 3-3 (current) and 5-3 (future)
 - Explanation of results expanded/clarified
- Committee recommends adoption of these revisions (as presented in April 12th review draft)

Table 3-3: Groundwater Results for Assessed Aquifers in Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Region – Current Conditions ^a		
Aquifer ^a	Estimated Current Groundwater Withdrawal (mgd) ^{b,c}	Sustainable Yield of Individual Aquifer (Min/Max, mgd) ^a
Claiborne Aquifer ^a	123-148 ^d (190-229 cfs) ^a	140-635 ^d (217-982 cfs) ^a
South-Central Georgia Upper Floridan ^a	282-366 ^d (436-566 cfs) ^a	622--836 ^d (962-1293 cfs) ^a
Upper Floridan Aquifer in the Dougherty Plains ^a	450-587 ^d (696-908 cfs) ^a	237--328 ^d (367-507 cfs) ^a

Source: Georgia EPD, March 2010 Synopsis Report: Groundwater Availability Assessment and subsequent results updates provided by EPD.^a

^bThe lower end of the range for withdrawals represents agricultural use in a moderate year, while the upper end represents agricultural use in a dry year.^a

