

Pee Dee River Basin Council (RBC) Meeting #31 Minutes
February 18th, 2025

RBC Members Present: Buddy Richardson, Megan Hyman, Cliff Chamblee, Cynthia Walters, Bob Perry, Lindsay Privette, Debra Buffkin, Eric Krueger, Michael Abney, Hughes Page, Jeff Steinmetz, & Tim Brown

Absent: Snipe Allen, Mike Bankert, Jason Gamble, Michael Hemingway, Frances McClary, Doug Newton, & John Rivers

Planning Team Present: JD Solomon, Matt Lindburg, Joe Koon, Scott Harder, Brooke Czwartacki, Andy Wachob, Alexis Modzelesky, Leigh Anne Monroe, Hannah Hartley, Thomas Walker, and Chikezie Isiguzo.

Total Attendance: 26

1. Call the Meeting to Order (J. D. Solomon - Facilitator)

a. Review of Meeting Objectives

J. D. Solomon (the Facilitator) called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and welcomed the members to the 31st Pee Dee RBC meeting. He highlighted the meeting's main objective, which was to review and discuss comments received on the draft of River Basin Plan and Discuss schedule and next steps for finalizing Plan.

b. Approval of February 18th Meeting Agenda and the December 3rd, 2024, meeting Minutes and Summary

The members rescheduled the approval of the December 3rd, 2024 meeting minutes to the next Pee Dee RBC meeting due to lack of quorum. The agenda received no changes from the RBC members.

2. Public/Agency Comment (JD Solomon)

There was no public/agency comment.

3. Review/discussion of comments received on Draft Plan (Matt Lindburg)

The February 2025 Pee Dee River Basin Council (RBC) meeting focused on reviewing and discussing comments received on the Draft Plan. The discussion was led by Matt Lindburg, who presented an overview of the comments and proposed responses. The primary objective of the meeting was to ensure that all public and agency feedback was addressed appropriately within the plan's framework.

Summary of Comments Received:

Three sets of written comments were received during the public comment period, submitted by:

Brad Turley (Carolina Wetlands Foundation)

Becky Ryan (Coastal Conservation League)

Neil Stevenson

Categorization of Comments:

The comments were grouped into three main categories:

A. Out of Scope – Topics beyond the framework of the River Basin Plan.

Already Addressed in the Plan – Issues raised that were already covered in existing sections.

Discussion on Out-of-Scope Comments:

Some comments were determined to be beyond the scope of the current iteration of the plan. These included:

- **Water Quality Considerations:** While water quality is an important issue, the plan primarily focuses on water quantity. Future iterations may incorporate water quality more fully.
- **Allocation of Water During Shortages:** The plan defers to existing South Carolina drought response frameworks rather than establishing new allocation recommendations.

B. Already Addressed in the Plan – Issues raised that were already covered in existing sections.

Several comments raised concerns that were already incorporated into the draft plan, including:

- **Hydrologic Impacts of Land Use Changes:** The plan acknowledges historical alterations in hydrology and incorporates these into the SWAM model used for projections.
- **Coordination with North Carolina:** The plan recognizes the importance of cross-state coordination and suggests engagement with the Yadkin-Pee Dee Water Management Group.
- **Projected Growth and Industrial Water Use:** The plan includes projections for municipal, agricultural, and industrial water use, reflecting expected growth in high-demand areas.
- **Saltwater Intrusion and Drought Conditions:** The need for improved modeling of tidal-influenced waterways is recommended.

- Additional Gauging and Monitoring: The plan recommends expanded monitoring of stream flows and groundwater levels.

C. Requiring Edits – Comments that warranted modifications or clarifications in the plan.

Edits and Modifications to the Draft Plan Based on the discussion, the following modifications will be made:

- Clarification on Non-Permitted Water Withdrawals: Acknowledgment that unpermitted withdrawals (such as private wells) are assumed to be negligible but will be monitored for potential future inclusion.
- Inclusion of SC Watershed Atlas Link: A reference and hyperlink to the SC Watershed Atlas will be added to Chapter 3 to provide stakeholders with additional resources.
- Enhancing Discussion on Water Quality and Quantity Interaction: A highlight box will be added to Chapter 7, addressing the relationship between water quality and proposed water management strategies.
- Recognition of Riparian Buffers: A note will be included in Chapter 2 to highlight the importance of riparian buffers in land and water protection strategies.

Next Steps:

Following the meeting, the plan will be revised to reflect these edits. RBC members will receive the updated version for final review within the next week. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to take the final vote on the plan before its formal adoption.

Conclusion:

The review session led by Matt Lindburg provided a structured approach to addressing public and agency feedback. The RBC reaffirmed its commitment to refining the plan while maintaining alignment with the established scope. The final plan will integrate key recommendations and clarifications to enhance clarity and stakeholder engagement.

Discussion:

Q: Water quality in the future? What does that look like? I've received a lot of calls about water quality planning.

A: Recommendation has always been that water quality be incorporated. Issue the RBC will work through it in implementation. RBC would consider what to address. What the RBC feels like is appropriate. ID ways to evaluate water quality issues. Second iteration topic has always been WQ. Agency will need to define it. Be complementary with other programs in DES. Surprised no high flow comments even though it was important to many early.

Q: Have you sent appendix D?

A: We haven't completed it yet

C: The plan describes minimum flow. Can we direct people from appendix to where it is in the document?

C: Can do in appendix D

Q: (In Chat)

A: Other basins may want to study that

Q: Does that include buffers? Local ordinances, is that what you're talking about?

Q: Water quality – out of scope. Better response – out of scope for this effort. Is that our intent?

A: I like the USACE response. Some like to hear the comment is addressed.

C: We were given a justification for why it was out of scope

C: PPAC process determined this approach

C: People are missing that we are trying to address quantity until 2070. Various interpretations of the plan. How do we make it more clear up front? Subject areas are gigantic. Can't tackle it all at once.

C: Don't believe its being missed. When you have so many of the public asking for quality work. They aren't missing the quantity part. Water that is contaminated is not available water.

Q: Still planning to meet after we vote?

A: Its been the intent all along. Not fleshed out plan yet

C: Water quality interests can be to hold it until after the plan moving forward.

4. Schedule and Next Steps (JD Solomon)

Following the review session, J. D. Solomon outlined the next steps for finalizing the plan.

These include:

I. Plan Revisions

- The draft plan will be updated to reflect the approved edits and modifications discussed in the meeting.

II. Distribution of Updated Draft

- A revised version of the plan will be shared with RBC members within the next week for review.

III. Final Review Meeting

- RBC members will be reconvened for a final review session before the official vote.

IV. Formal Adoption Vote

- Once members have reviewed the updated plan, a final vote will be conducted to approve the plan.

5. Closing Comments (Buddy Richardson/JD Solomon)

Thomas Walker introduced Michael Abney, who replaced John Crutchfield in the Pee Dee RBC. J. D. Solomon concluded by appreciating the level of engagement and discussion from the RBC members during the Plan review process.

The next meeting of the Pee Dee RBC will be held on March 4th and will be a virtual only meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 10:24 AM

Minutes: Chikezie Isiguzo and Tom Walker

Approved: 3/4/25

RBC Chat:

09:13:31 From Lindsay Privette to Everyone:

My audio has gone out; i'm logging out and logging back on.

09:18:31 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Thank you.

09:18:58 From Leigh Anne Monroe - SC DES to Everyone:

Joe is in another meeting.

09:25:00 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Great idea.

09:34:47 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Thank you.

09:51:51 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Good idea.

09:55:02 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Yes. Thank you.

09:55:28 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Amen!

09:55:53 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Thank you!!

09:56:38 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Thank you, Matt!!

10:08:02 From Eric Krueger to Everyone:

But... just pointing out: A few years ago when we started on this process, quantity WAS a very high concern in the public at that time. PFAS has stepped forward during the timeline of RBC's, while the work in the RBCs has done a lot to quell the worries around quantity.

10:08:32 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Yes. Can't we say we address it moving forward?

10:09:58 From Eric Krueger to Everyone:

Yes, for sure... I'd just like to know we have at least a concept of a plan to actually do that. I fear it will sound like a bureaucratic push-off if we say that, then take no action.

10:16:29 From Winyah Rivers to Everyone:

Yes.

10:21:28 From Laura Chamblee to Everyone:

Not sure why can't hear me, but a few thoughts. In response to comments start with a comment that the team was frustrated with constraints the planning process had on not looking at quality and high quantity.

10:22:25 From Laura Chamblee to Everyone:

Second comment: perhaps provide link to DES resources on TMDLs for quantity issue

10:24:59 From Thomas Walker to Everyone:

meeting adjourned