

Minutes for GWMP Group Meeting #4

June 20, 2019

Welcome by Jennifer Hughes

Introduction by Kristy Ellenberg

Introductions by all in attendance

Today is the focus of the strategies. These are where the plan becomes specific to the region.

Table-top exercise: rotate between the different tables representing different strategies, and to mark down ideas for each one on the table paper. At the table to start the discussion were some of the proposed elements and action items from the conversations we've already been having, and some have other items such as the purpose and how we are protecting the resource. The plan is one step in the hierarchy of the groundwater management program. Each table had a DHEC person there to listen and be a resource and make sure we were writing your ideas down and guide the discussion. While at groups, we thought about:

1. What are the essential elements you want as part of the strategy
2. What are the questions and concerns on where this strategy is, is it unclear or does it need better focus?
3. Other ideas we need to consider for this strategy

Group Table Discussions

Highlights of Table Discussions:

1. Strategy 1
 - a. How do we know these areas? Ties into groundwater monitoring network and need for that
 - b. Criteria for that? Cones of depression, concentrated pumping, lower surface water flows, decline in well levels
 - c. Idea: making a requirement for new wells to made available to DNR to use for pot map level runs
 - d. Make sure monitoring data has proper QA/QC; make sure the quality of data is the best we can find and develop
 - e. Abandonment of wells – this needs to be in compliance with well regulations
 - f. Idea: with monitoring of new wells: require installation of drawdown tubing so taking measurements is easier
 - g. Wordsmithing on some things, application of new wells, we will not be going back and modifying existing wells (clarifying that)

2. Strategy 2

- a. "Trust Rob"
- b. How do we define what reasonable is? Part of our criteria is use standard operating procedures (SOPs) based on industry standards, if there isn't any SOP ask applicant to include those from their particular facility in the application
- c. "Beneficial use" – who gets to decide if the use is beneficial? Beneficial use means you need to show us what you are using this for; give demonstrated need in the application
- d. Alternative sources- concern of when DHEC would force users to do implement that. We are asking you to do this when reasonable. We ask why the well would be the best use, but understand when no surface water available. We also may ask you to use a different aquifer because of the quality of the aquifer based on what the use is for, or increased use by another user in the aquifer.
- e. During reductions in renewals – we look at reasonable use and we may have reduced "paper permits" if the permit was over issued and the user is not using anything close to the originally issued permit.
- f. Alternative sources – sometimes we try pushing surface water use over groundwater if available. We would rather see conjunctive use because there are times one or the other isn't available. Emergency wells are an option for some users also.
- g. Demonstrated reasonable use – it's a balancing act. Question: where in plan are we making sure health of aquifers is being taken into consideration with regards to those using the source? Answer: Strategy 1 is where looking for those areas that have an issue forming; all of these strategies are taken into account when determining permit decisions. A water supplier running out of water will want to help look for other sustainable uses if initial source is running low

3. Strategy 3

- a. Looking at what is available and DNR coverage map: there are no wells in Bamberg County, and a gap in eastern/south Orangeburg County, so as a group we should be looking to find ways to increase coverage.
- b. We would like to have more wells to cover these gaps.
- c. There is definitely feedback into Strategy 1
- d. People would like more frequent access to well data (weekly?). Maybe part of education and outreach would be where to find DNR data on their website.
- e. There are currently 3 telemetry wells that you can look at with more regular updates on DNR's website.
- f. To fill these gaps, we could possibly come up with wells that people have already drilled and are no longer using, and can make these into monitoring wells. These would especially be of help in an aquifer we would like to monitor. Coming up with money for this is the major concern.
- g. A hurdle will be trying to inform people of data that is already there and looking for ways that are pilot holes or others as monitoring wells or not in use.
- h. Could people be compensated if state agencies are coming onto property? No.

- i. Currently, DNR has been asking for money to put more monitoring wells in and surface water gage stations, but the stakeholders can help to support DNR to get more funding on annual basis.
 - j. If instruments are left on farmers' property, can they potentially be taught to measure the well and show the local community their water levels in those wells? Maybe develop an SOP for farmers to follow to see if the data could be validated.
 - k. Continue to use the groundwater monitoring network to inform groundwater model.
4. Strategy 4
- a. Educating withdrawers:
 - i. Engage stakeholders and those with the BMPs, how to bring these groups together and develop generalized SOP and DHEC can be a vehicle for that communication to new withdrawers. Timing is important.
 - ii. Also trying to send the these BMPs will be difficult. Attaching to the back of a letter might not get people to read it. People may need incentives, for example have to read BMPs before getting permit application, etc.
 - b. Educating general public
 - i. Will be more difficult. How do we do it? We are looking at taking language and make sure public can understand what we are trying to communicate.
 - ii. Ideas: improve technology and way we communicate; digital campaign or PSA, video clips about program and state of GW in SC, ads on social media, could help control the message; pamphlets are not as helpful
 - c. Action: more concrete goals and descriptive of who/how we are going to educate these
5. Strategy 5
- a. Wordsmithing of strategy to work on how we also work with other partners with their work and regulations for their areas
 - b. As state water planning moves forward with RBC etc, will they be involved the same way
 - c. Wordsmithing with "beneficial use" and "waste" and "conserving resource"
6. Strategy 6
- a. Permit notification: can be one part of the continued stakeholder engagement. Do we have an ongoing TAC, or just bring in when needed. It would have a different purpose than the one in the Trident, and be one that gets updates on user and area data and how strategies are progressing such as groundwater monitoring network and outreach.
 - b. Don't always need the TAC, maybe only when needed with specific goals.
 - c. Don't forget local and county partners (soil conservation districts, local businesses, etc.)

Consensus on Strategy 6 – will of group, we want the final draft to review next time: how do we want to do the stakeholder engagement? Ongoing TAC, doesn't have to meet every time before a permit is finalized, there other means of public notification.

- We need a TAC. Times change, right now everyone in the room is friendly and don't have any issues with each other, but this can change and there needs to be a structure. Maybe just pick one person from each industry, a sub-group of this room. Have dialogue with other capacity use

areas. Whatever we come up now isn't necessary going to work in the future, so needs to have a mechanism so the group can meet to evaluate where we are and how the strategies are moving forward.

- Make the TAC more like a biannual meeting of an update of the cap use area; have the group get back for the review of permit renewals. Getting these local knowledge updates would be helpful for DHEC also.
- Whoever is on this TAC would be notified of permits coming out (by email possibly?). If it is seemingly problematic and the group can convene if necessary. Don't need to do this for every permit. We will maintain a contact list for this. If you have an individual comment this can be sent directly to us.
- The workgroup needs to be defined, and make sure no stakeholder is not missing/make sure everyone is included based on sector and geographically region.
- Can have somebody over the TAC, can be DHEC or Clemson, or another group based on what the group decides.
- Trident has a TAC, but is advisory only. They do not get a say in the permit decision, just to make sure they are following the management plan in their area. They ask questions and we give answers about how we are following the regulations and their management plan. This can make it more burdensome.
- Is the plan doing what we think it is, and are there changes we need to do? The plan needs to be a living document to have changes and DHEC will have a big stake in the changes.
- Public information exchange with DHEC and community, only once a year? Notify when new ones and if any problems? Opportunity to review, not necessarily to discuss.
- After the evaluation for the region, we will meet again to share the recommendations and results from the evaluation. The main focus will be getting all of the data and review draft results with group.
- Have contact list and we will maintain it for new permits to allow for comments, and annual meeting (starting w/ this group) where we present current conditions, update on how plan is working, and any shortfalls or over reaches we see. Check in and see how strategies are, do overview of permits issued and sum up what is happening in the area, water use, changes we need to look at for the future, etc. Good idea to start looking at industries and what their doing, use it as an educational opportunity.
- Once annual water use report is out (we can distribute it to the group directly), this would be a good time to meet to analyze the condition of cap use area.
- More definition with TAC, the determination of when need to meet if permittee would need to be discussed, what is that threshold? In regulation we can hold public meeting if significant public interest, we would have public meeting and can have a TAC meeting as well if significant concern.

Staff will get this together and sent out by the 2nd or 3rd of July to give a few weeks to review it before the last meeting. Any comments within the week would be preferred so they can be incorporated (27th of June), give us a week to modify before the 4th.

Coming back together on July 18th: looking through it for the final time with any final concerns so draft can be sent out beyond this group to more stakeholders.

When draft out, no substantive content change. Just thinking we may need more time to review what we have done so far so if there is more that needs to change, we can look through again. We want everyone a chance to read it before the next meeting. If there are substantive changes that have not been brought up, we need to talk about those July 18th if there are things with big question marks still. Doesn't mean that after July 18th no change will make, we did process wise want to take a draft and make it available to others outside of the room. In August we would like a public meeting to get more feedback and open house that will engage broader group. We will come back after that and incorporate more of those public comments. Final needs to be in September for DHEC Board.

Want before DHEC Board in November, but this is a long process, needs to be done 60 days before that meeting because of 30 day register and comment period.

Draft as it's out, we have more things to add to it, if you see something now that you feel is missing, get it to us as soon as possible, let us know. If we need a conversation, tell us so we can bring it up at the next meeting for open discussion.