

UNRBA Technical Advisory Committee February 25, 2004 Meeting Summary

Prepared March 8, 2004

Our mission: To preserve and protect the water quality in the Upper Neuse River Basin through innovative, cost effective and environmentally sound strategies and to create a coalition of local governments and stakeholders in a water resources partnership.

Introductions and Meeting Objectives

The Technical Advisory Committee of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) met at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, February 25, 2004 in the Triangle J Council of Governments conference room. Chris Dreps began the meeting by asking participants to introduce themselves. The meeting objectives were:

- UNRBA Projects Update;
- Discuss Ecosystem Enhancement Program local watershed planning and Upper Neuse watershed prioritization;
- Discuss the Upper Neuse Plan implementation process; and
- Propose FY 2004-2005 member government dues to the TAC.

Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Organization	E-mail address or phone
Barry Baker	Granville County Planning	planning@granvillecounty.org
Mike Coughlin	Wake Co. Env. Services	jcoughlin@co.wake.nc.us
Mitch Pergerson	Person County Parks & Rec.	Mitchp@personcounty.net
Paula Murphy	Person County	Pmurphy@personcounty.net
Sherry MacQueen	NC DENR PWS Source Water Protection	Sherry.macqueen@ncmail.net
William Breazeale	Raleigh City Planning	William.breazeale@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Kimberly Brewer	Tetra Tech	Kimberly.Brewer@tetrattech.com
Chris Dreps	UNRBA	dreps@tjco.org
Mary Giorgino	USGS	giorgino@usgs.gov
Marissa Archibald	Duke U. Public Policy	Mna6@duke.edu
Drew Cummings	Duke U. Public Policy	Ac31@duke.edu
Eben Polk	Duke U. Public Policy	Eben.polk@duke.edu
Silvia Terziotti	USGS	Seterzio@usgs.gov
Katie Ertmer	Franklin County Planning	Kertmer@co.franklin.nc.us
Scott Miles	Town of Wake Forest	Scott.miles@ci.wake-forest.nc.us
Bonnie Duncan	NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program	Bonnie.Duncan@ncmail.net
Nancy Newell	Durham Env. Services	nnewell@ci.durham.nc.us
Jocelyn Elliott	NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program	Jocelyn.elliott@ncmail.net
John Cox	City of Durham Stormwater	jcox@ci.durham.nc.us

UNRBA Projects Update

Site Evaluation Tool (SET)

Kimberly Brewer presented an overview of the SET (for more details on the SET, notes from 3-12-03 TAC meeting and the "Projects and Activities" page on www.unrba.org). The SET is a pre-design evaluation and screening tool that helps a site developer to consider site BMP configurations, effectiveness, and costs early in the process. The SET can facilitate stormwater "low-impact development" and retrofits. However, the SET is not a tool that will determine stormwater design for the site designer. Tetra Tech has worked with Mecklenburg County on development of their SET and is currently working with Cary using the SET to create a town stormwater plan.

The UNRBA won two grants from NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Water Quality to assist with the development of the SET. These grants are (1) a \$40,000 grant from the State Nonpoint Source Grant Program (319 Program) and (2) a \$9,900 grant from the State 205(j) grant program.

Ms. Brewer described the three tasks that the SET Task Group has begun working on.

- Task 1, Best Management Practice Menu and Removal Efficiency Assumptions
- Task 2, Determining whether the SET will utilize a hydrology target or will simply use the hydrology output of the tool as an educational tool
- Task 3, Matching the SET and Upper Neuse Plan modeling assumptions

USGS Watershed Evaluation Tool (WET)

Mary Giorgino updated the TAC on progress in developing this national pilot project. This will be a GIS based tool that can be used by local governments, UNRBA, and resource agencies. The WET will automate many important watershed analyses using the USGS National Hydrography Dataset for the Upper Neuse (Mary called this "smart streams"). Applications include TMDL planning, Phase II planning, local watershed planning (e.g., NC Wetlands Restoration Program), and evaluation of subwatersheds for monitoring and restoration potential.

The WET Task Group met in December and identified desired tool functions and data needs. Since that meeting, the WET Task Group has ranked the tasks and Silvia Terziotti has created the digital elevation model that will be used in the WET. The next steps are to begin working on a water quality monitoring plan for the Upper Neuse, to finish the digital elevation model, and to compile more layers.

The draft WET will be done in July, and this tool should be of great value for the local governments in the Upper Neuse. To learn more about the tool, see the "Projects and Activities" page of the UNRBA website (www.unrba.org)

Ellerbe Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and Little River Riparian Corridor Plan

The UNRBA has proposed two new projects. One is to assist the City of Durham and the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association in developing a watershed restoration plan for Ellerbe Creek. The second is a riparian corridor plan that would help the Eno River

Association to locate opportunities for protecting riparian corridors in the Little River Watershed.

Lake Michie Watershed Policy Study

Students from the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University are examining the following policy question in the Lake Michie watershed:

"What can Durham, Orange, and Person Counties and Durham City do to protect water quality in the Flat River watershed in a manner that is fair to communities in the watershed?"

The class is a "spring consulting project" run annually by Professor Arthur W. Spengler. Five students will devote about 100 hours each in February, March, and April to answer the question.

Marissa Archibald, Drew Cummings, and Eben Polk updated the TAC on their progress to date. They have conducted research, interviewed the several people from Person County, Orange County, and Durham County. They described the problem in economic terms, explaining that the local governments view impacts to water quality as a "positive externality", meaning that we do not account for the costs of water quality degradation in our calculations of development costs and benefits. The group is examining both cooperative and unilateral solutions to the externality problem.

In addition, the group is examining the issue of fairness, defining fair solutions as those that 1) are acceptable to everyone involved and 2) distribute costs and benefits equally.

Based on advice from the TAC, the group will present its preliminary findings to the UNRBA at the next Board Meeting in late March. In early May, they will deliver to us a detailed policy report explaining their analysis and presenting their policy recommendations. This is an exciting opportunity to provide the UNRBA member governments a fair, impartial look at this issue and help open up a positive dialogue on policy approaches.

Upper Neuse Watershed Plan Implementation

Chris Dreps presented and update of progress in implementing the recommendations of the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan. Chris has begun working with several "local government implementation teams" from the UNRBA member Governments to define the objectives and set the tasks for implementation. Chris handed the group a description of the implementation process, the implementation teams, and a spreadsheet of the progress to date (attached to this meeting summary).

Upon seeing the spreadsheet, several TAC members had recommendations for updating the information provided. Chris will send the most recent versions of the more detailed spreadsheets to the "implementation team" members from each local government.

TAC Chair

Perry Sugg, the TAC Chair, has left Orange County to work with the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program. Although Mr. Sugg will be able to continue working on the TAC, we will need to replace him as TAC Chair. If you are interested in this position, please contact Chris Dreps.

NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program: Local Watershed Plans in the Upper Neuse

Bonnie Duncan and Jocelyn Elliott from the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP) provided the TAC with a brief description of EEP's local watershed planning and NC DOT's compensatory mitigation, which drives local watershed planning and project location. Ms. Duncan explained to the TAC that NC DOT has provided EEP with data describing the mitigation needs, but the EEP is still working out some flaws in the data. Ms. Duncan feels secure that the Upper Neuse Watershed will have "an immense amount of need" for projects. This means that we will likely be a focus for local watershed plans and the potential restoration and land protection projects accompanying that process.

The EEP has focused on relatively large watersheds (14-digit hydrologic units) for local watershed plans in the past. The new focus is to work in smaller "subwatersheds", which tend to be 15 square-miles or smaller. The EEP usually completes plans through technical consultants who facilitate the process with a wide variety of community stakeholders.

The UNRBA has been discussing with Ms. Duncan and others in the EEP the possibility of managing local watershed plans in our watershed. Ms. Duncan mentioned that some possible roles for the UNRBA might be:

- Group facilitator (working with the stakeholders)
- Helping to implement other aspects of the plan beyond what EEP is able to do
- Some of the up-front (level one) technical analysis.

There is a good possibility that the UNRBA will be able to assist in future local watershed plans. The benefits to local communities include:

- The ability to undertake a significant watershed study at little or no cost to the local government;
- A more detailed understanding of the issues facing your most important local watersheds; and
- Potentially millions of dollars worth of restoration and land protection projects funded by the state.

Put simply, this is an opportunity for Upper Neuse communities. Although the EEP cannot commit to a local plan until the DOT's mitigation needs are fully understood, there is a good chance that the UNRBA could be working on this effort soon.

The TAC discussed briefly the need to prioritize subwatersheds within the Upper Neuse for local watershed plans. Chris Dreps presented some possible criteria for prioritizing subwatersheds based on discussions with EEP staff:

- Importance of resource (i.e., water supply watershed, groundwater recharge area)
- Feasibility of project (local support for plan is strong)
- Current watershed health (impervious area low, point sources few, nutrient loading low, water quality/biology good based on monitoring, important natural resources exist)
- Future risk exists in watershed (future impervious area high, future nutrient loading high, transportation projects coming, high sedimentation potential)

Several members of the TAC agreed with this list of criteria. William Breazeale felt that the order of the list matches the order of importance of the criteria and stated that importance of the resource and project feasibility is the greatest priorities.

Mr. Breazeale, Sherry MacQueen, Bonnie Duncan, and others are concerned at the number of similar existing efforts at watershed planning going on in our area. The major concern is that these efforts may overlap. In particular, the group mentioned that any attempt at setting criteria to guide local watershed plans should combine the following efforts:

- EEP's Watershed Needs Assessment Report Team Report
- NC's Source Water Assessment (SWAP) Reports

UNRBA Dues for FY 2004-2005

Chris Dreps presented the proposed FY 2004-2005 dues to the TAC. Although this year's budget is likely to be higher than last year's, many of the projects are paid for by grants, and the UNRBA dues should stay the same as last those paid last year. However, Person County's Planning Board has recommended to the Board of County Commissioners to withdraw from the UNRBA. Although the Person County BOCC has not decided upon the recommendation, if the County chooses to stop participating, the proposed dues for other member governments could be affected. The table below was provided to the TAC. Scenario 1 shows dues unchanged from FY 2003-2004. Scenario 2 shows a proposed dues structure that would make up for the possible loss of dues from Person County by spreading the shortfall among the remaining member governments.

	scenario 1	scenario 2
Butner	\$3,027	\$3,289
Creedmoor	\$915	\$987
Durham (City)	\$18,729	\$19,003
Durham County	\$9,483	\$11,238
Franklin County	\$1,020	\$1,144
Granville County	\$5,259	\$6,200
Hillsborough	\$1,475	\$1,547
Orange County	\$9,105	\$10,786
Person County	\$6,235	\$0
Raleigh	\$24,676	\$24,732
S & W Districts*	\$0	\$0
Stem	\$698	\$759
Wake County	\$4,955	\$5,837
Wake Forest	\$665	\$720
Subtotal Dues	\$86,242	\$86,242

Next Steps

The next meeting of the UNRBA Board is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24 from 1-3 p.m. at the TJCOG offices.