

UNRBA Technical Advisory Committee June 16, 2006 Meeting Summary

Prepared June 16, 2006

UNRBA 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 9:30 a.m. on Friday, June 16, 2006 in the Triangle J Council of Governments conference room.

Meeting agenda:

- Announce relevant happenings;
- Reflect on and discuss the role of the UNRBA in protecting Upper Neuse water resources;
- Discuss participant roles; and
- Discuss Implementation Planning process design.

Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Organization	E-mail address
John Cox	City of Durham Stormwater Services	john.cox@durhamnc.gov
Joe Pearce	Durham County Engineering	jpearce@co.durham.nc.us
Nancy Newell	City of Durham Water Management	nancy.newell@durhamnc.gov
Barry Baker	Granville County Planning	planning@granvillecounty.org
Wesley Poole	Orange Co. Sed. & Erosion Control	wpoole@co.orange.nc.us
Terry Hackett	Orange Co. Sed. & Erosion Control	thackett@co.orange.nc.us
Paula Murphy	Person County Planning	pmurphy@personcounty.net
Amy Hathaway	City of Raleigh Stormwater	Amy.Hathaway@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Mark Senior	City of Raleigh Stormwater	Mark.Senior@ci.raleigh.nc.us
George Rogers	City of Raleigh Public Utilities	george.rogers@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Michelle Hane	City of Raleigh Planning	michelle.hane@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Tommy Craven	City of Raleigh, City Council	tfcraven@nc.rr.com
Melinda Clark	Wake County Environmental Services	melinda.clark@co.wake.nc.us
Tom Gerow, Jr.	NC Division of Forest Resources	tom.a.gerow@ncmail.net
Michael Herrmann	NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program	michael.herrmann@ncmail.net
Sarah Bruce	Upper Neuse River Basin Association	sbruce@tjcog.org
Shelby Powell	Kerr-Tar Council of Governments	spowell@kerrtarco.org

Announcements

Chris Dreps will return to work from Mexico, where he was doing rural water resources protection and supply work, next week.

Sarah Bruce reported that she will be conducting a training on the Site Evaluation Tool (SET) for Durham Planning on June 22.

Sarah Bruce announced that the UNRBA and the Clean Water Education Partnership are teaming to host two booths at the Eno River Festival July 1, 2, and 4. Volunteers are needed; contact Sarah or Laura Webb Smith (laura.smith@durhamnc.gov). Volunteers receive day passes to the Festival.

John Cox announced that the disparate versions (the session law and the EMC rule) of the NC Phase II rules may be resolved by a new bill in the legislature, Senate Bill 1566. See <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2005&BillID=S1566> for more information and the most current version of the bill.

Joe Pearce announced that the new nutrient offset payment schedule has been suspended until August (temporarily reverted to previous fee schedule). There is a Senate Bill (S1862) that would make this suspension permanent. (Addendum: Sarah has a memorandum from NCDWQ via Joe Pearce that she can provide on request.)

There has also been a challenge to the increased Nitrogen offset payments. Good information on why all this is happening and how it will affect local governments is currently lacking. Meeting participants noted the importance of incorporating the fee into local ordinance by reference to statute rather than by stating a specific amount.

Ground Rules for UNRBA TAC Meetings

Sarah Bruce showed attendees a draft list of meeting ground rules, listed here:

- Keep an open mind
- Listen when others are speaking
- Put cell phones on vibrate
- Be succinct
- During brainstorming, don't criticize or evaluate ideas

No amendments were requested, so these ground rules will guide discussions until modified.

Reflection

Sarah Bruce asked meeting participants to consider the following question and to write a response: What does or could UNRBA do that would fulfill an important need or function in your world? Participants then took turns sharing their thoughts on this subject. TAC members generated many excellent suggestions (see end of this summary for detailed notes of this discussion). Most discussion on important roles for the UNRBA revolved around the following themes:

- coordinating and disseminating information (e.g., legislation, planning efforts)
- coordinating management strategies for greater consistency / targeting watershed protection efforts for maximum effectiveness
- expanding the tools and resources available to local governments to protect watersheds
- educating elected officials and stakeholders (e.g., development) about watershed management strategies

The Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan

After a brief break, Sarah Bruce briefly discussed the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan's goals (protect drinking water supplies and aquatic habitat) and general findings (current development regulations are inadequate to protect these uses in perpetuity). Sarah said that it is time to take the Watershed Management Plan to the next level by prioritizing management strategies for implementation, which will be accomplished through "Implementation Planning."

Participant Roles

Sarah then said a few words about UNRBA participant roles. The Board sets policies and general directions, and the TAC advises the Board on technical issues and carries out the activities of the watershed management cycle (see Cornerstone 2 in the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Approach).

Sarah asked attendees to talk about their participation on the TAC with other members of their departments to see what they thought would work best with regard to TAC representation. The important thing is that TAC membership is constituted in such a way that decisions made at a given meeting are considered valid by people who attend subsequent meetings.

Representation and decision-making procedures will be discussed at the next TAC meeting.

Implementation Planning

Sarah then facilitated a group discussion of the reasons and drivers for undertaking Implementation Planning, such as a directives from the Board of Directors and a law (GS 143-214.14(g)). The group generated a number of other objectives that might be important to incorporate into this process. (See the end of this summary for detailed notes of this discussion). Themes of this discussion generally centered around:

- Building ownership and buy-in on plan and watershed management
- Providing concrete information on implementation: responsibilities, timelines
- Prioritizing strategies
- Increasing BOD engagement and willingness to promote the strategies locally
- Addressing stakeholder concerns
- Identifying opportunities for cross-jurisdictional cooperation/assistance
- Obtaining better information on fiscal impacts of management strategies
- Helping stakeholders see how plans and existing or proposed rules fit together
- Helping stakeholders/local governments prepare for future requirements

Sustaining Implementation Planning

Sarah said that if the TAC preferred the facilitated discussion approach to meetings that this would be attempted for future meetings as well. The TAC offered several suggestions for sustaining the Implementation Planning process, such as:

- UNRBA staff give perspective on what future meetings will entail so TAC members can be more prepared to discuss issues
- present TAC goings-on to BOD for feedback to make sure TAC is going in the desired direction as process moves forward

Next TAC Meeting

The group agreed that, since Implementation Planning will require a sustained effort, standing meetings are justified. Sarah will solicit times for standing meetings via email.

Reflection Notes

What does or could UNRBA do that would fulfill an important need or function in your world?

- provide services to empower/enable member governments to protect water quality; facilitate collaboration between members.
 - identify water quality monitoring and modeling needs; facilitate cooperation between local governments & other members; develop management strategies; promote and track implementation; increase local knowledge through watershed plans and demonstration projects that look at implementation alternatives; help local governments grow the toolboxes of LID methods; provide much-needed education; apply for grants and have the staff / resources available for in-kind matches that local governments don't have access to.
 - look for grant opportunities (Cary got a grant in the Jordan Lake watershed to look at LID practices – possibly a 319 grant?); education of staff and policy makers and public through TAC members and participation in festivals and community events; take advantage of the timeliness of stormwater issues during hurricane season to educate on advantages of planning for stormwater problems; perhaps get a listserv so cross-coordination and information could be shared with other members (e.g., if Raleigh is doing a plan that might affect or be affected by activities upstream, would give neighboring jurisdictions ability to comment/notify planners of that).
 - land conservancies should be invited to TAC meetings; should tie water issues to land planning issues and comprehensive planning; discuss development issues; tie water quality to broader growth themes (costs, what is happening in the development community); acknowledge part of watershed that is in Camp Butner because conservation of that property would meet 2 public goals: 1. preserve water quality with conservation of that land, and 2: land conservation because of unexploded ordnance and Army Corps of Engineers goals for the area; use management plan to point out dual purposes of preserving certain lands.
 - the industry and regulatory community needs a bigger toolbox – need research into creation of new/different water quality devices because the ones currently available in state regulations may not work as effectively on smaller (less than 5 acres) drainage areas; development community does not have enough adequate devices for smaller drainage areas to manage stormwater effectively, so we should encourage more research.
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- create more formal methods of communication to provide information to governing boards, perhaps through an annual report or regular presentations to local boards/staff.
- help educate TAC members through TAC meetings; educate contractors and others, possibly through localized “lunch & learn” meetings for contractors working in the basin, explore possibilities of joining groups of contractors common to multiple counties in the basin.
- provide a forum collaborating and forming consensus; discuss differing local regulations are so this group can help coordinate local regulations to bring them closer to being more similar across jurisdictions; this would give consistency to developers and would lessen the spread of development pressures to less-regulated areas of the watershed.
- lobby for issues on a state level on behalf of member governments?; provide more legislative updates at TAC and/or BOD meetings.
- facilitate regional coordination from a conservation standpoint; look at regional conservation needs; help provide a regional vision and marketing materials to notify the public about those needs and priorities.
- coordinate with DWQ five-year basin plan update; be a leader in the basin, helping local governments to have a major voice; redevelop collective resolve and a more muscular approach to protecting the watershed; step up to the plate during this exciting time of interest in watershed planning.
- facilitate coordination among stakeholders on issues of mutual concern; consider creating a listserv or other communication mode for Upper Neuse-specific events/issues.

Implementation Planning Notes

Why do we need an Implementation Planning process?

- Gives ownership, assigns responsibilities, and gives tools so we know how to get recommendations done (e.g., funding, timelines, importance, etc.)
- Prioritize strategies both locally and as a region
- Bring issues of prioritization to BOD to get some guidance on what they want TAC to work on
- show BOD specifics on how management strategies will affect their area; might change their level of support
- build BOD voice on actual implementation (BOD needs more of a relationship with the priority-setting); ask Board about THEIR concerns
- opportunity to address stakeholder concerns about fairness of management strategies and identify good opportunities for cross-jurisdictional cooperation/assistance
- plan needs to have buy-in of ALL members; education and feedback loop needed for BOD input
- Examine political hurdles
- Involve communities
- Identify “low-hanging fruit” – things we can get started on immediately

- Prevent future problems
- make presentations to governing bodies to say “we’ll be bringing this to you again when more information is available”
- get BOD involved in prioritization and consensus-building to give them personal knowledge/background on the issues
- BOCC and City Councils will listen to their TAC and BOD members; BOD is more able to make strategic plans for the UNRBA
- When city councils discuss regional issues, BOD member might not be able to sway full council; all elected officials need to be involved in the process if \$\$ will be involved
- Builds consensus, which is very important (getting beyond “recommendations”)
- Opportunity for Board and TAC to exchange ideas (consider a collaborative planning session); increase their level of comfort sharing info with fellow council/BOCC members
- examine a fiscal impacts of environmental objectives; an analysis of financial considerations will help frame BOD support and help prioritize; we need lists of pros and cons; need detailed information on impacts, costs, and benefits
- Falls Lake has a TMDL coming, so that will reduce some of the resistance to some recommended measures; other conditions make this a timely endeavor
- Lots of staff expertise that can be taken advantage of
- We have a goal of where we want to be, now we need incremental improvements to get us there
- TMDL will come with some “have to’s”; UNRBA needs to consider those issues in our planning
- help stakeholders see how plans fit together (TMDL, WMP, Basin Plan, UNRBA Implementation Plan, etc.)
- UNRBA should update BOD in those other plans/regs so they don’t come as a surprise
- present to BOD on rules that come out in Jordan Lake plan since that is likely a model that will be used for Falls Lake plan.
- in Raleigh, staff develops ideas and gives to council; have retreats w/ council where staff can update on more complex issues
- UNRBA TAC has the opportunity to assist with the solution for problems when TMDL comes about; TAC can be ahead of the curve, could have solutions ready to present to BOD, who will be an attentive audience at that point. If TAC suggests a skeletal solution, that will give the BOD something to start with as a response to issues in TMDL. So long as UNRBA is targeted and reasonable with recommendations, they will be well received by City Councils. Take advantage of staff expertise on TAC.