



Vision and Goals Technical Memorandum

Coastal Georgia Regional Water
Planning Council

Cumberland Island

Supplemental Material
Initial Recommended Coastal Georgia
Regional Water Plan

May 2011



*Cumberland Island
photo courtesy of the Georgia
Department of Industry,
Trade & Tourism*

1.0 Introduction

The central purpose of Georgia's State Water Planning process is to "guide Georgia in managing water resources in a sustainable manner to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens". The Coastal Georgia Regional Water Planning Council (Coastal Council) was established to help accomplish this at the regional level. This Technical Memorandum summarizes the process used by the Coastal Council to fulfill this purpose.

The Coastal Council first considered how water is used and managed in the region. The Council then considered the vision and goals that should be developed for water resource management in the region. To accomplish this Council found it useful to describe the economic, population, environmental and water use conditions that would be desired for the region over the next 40 years. This was accomplished through a series of discussions at several initial Council meetings.

The discussions of vision and goals began at the March 2009 kickoff meeting of the Statewide Water Planning effort. Council Members completed the "Water 35" exercise. This exercise involved Council members identifying critical factors that should be addressed and evaluated during the regional water planning process. Each Council member identified his/her 5 most important factors and then discussed these factors with other Council members. The factors were scored based on their discussions to help organize the discussion points. The results of the exercise were summarized and provided to Council at their first meeting.



Coastal Georgia Council Boundary

2.0 Coastal Georgia RWPC "Water 35" Results

- Reach a consensus
- Balance economic, environmental, and conservation needs of the Region
- Balance of uses; balance of impacts
- Balance diverging interest in Plan
- Honest communication
- Consider other viewpoints

- Protect groundwater from saltwater intrusion
- Devise an all-inclusive plan of action
- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Critique ideas; don't criticize people
- Consider impacts beyond this generation and this group
- Keep an open mind for the future
- Engage in public outreach

The outcome of the “Water 35” exercise was built upon during the next Council Meeting [05/04/2009] and Council Members were asked to identify Trends, Forces, and Factors that are or will be affecting water use and management in the Coastal region over the next 40 years. The following Trends, Forces, and Factors were identified by the Council

3.0 Trends, Forces and Factors Results

Technology

- Desalination
- Upgrade of Infrastructure/Treatment Plants
- Reuse for Wastewater (Purple Pipe)
- Wastewater to Drinkability Standards
- Groundwater Recharge

Political

- Development of Infrastructure
- Lack of Adequate Regional Planning
- External Challenges to Our Water Supply
- Regulatory/Public Perception of Impacts
- Cap and Trade
- Regional Reservoirs

- Downstream from Everyone

Social

- Education
- In Migration (Population Growth)
- Shift from Industrial to Residential
- Wastewater Plants vs. Septic
- Incompatible Land Uses

Environment

- Reuse of Water to Prolong Groundwater Resources
- Greater Use of Surface Water
- Groundwater Recharge
- Land Use
- Saltwater Intrusion
- Hurricane Protection
- Maintaining Navigable Channels/Dredging
- TMDL Allocation on Existing Water Courses

Economic

- Cost of Desalination
- Interbasin Transfer
- Panama Canal Modification and Shipping Trends
- Treatment Cost of Surface Water
- State Boundary Difference
- Military and Federal Owned Lands

4.0 Establishment of Vision and Goals

The work on the development of the regional vision and goals task continued through the next Council Meeting [06/25/2009]. Additional background information was provided to Council on how regional vision and goals can be utilized to guide the selection of the water resource management practices. It was emphasized that certain management practices, if implemented, can either help advance the regional vision and goals objectives or, conversely, the management practices might impair attainment of the vision and goals.

It was also pointed out that eventually the Coastal Georgia Council will need to develop a decision process for selecting water management practices. The identification and adoption of a regional vision and goals are a vital part of developing that decision making process. Please see the Council's "Management Practices Selection Process Technical Memorandum" for more information on how this was accomplished.

The Coastal Georgia Council worked on refining the information into a concise vision statement and a series of goals that reflected the ideas that had been discussed over the Council meetings. The Council focused on summarizing the information identified within the context of the following questions.

What do you want your rivers, lakes, and groundwater to do for you and the citizens in your planning region?

- Consideration was given to the following factors
- Supporting the region's and state's economy
- Protecting public health and natural systems
- Enhancing the quality of life for all citizens

What types of resources/needs do you want to protect?

What do you want to achieve with your water resources?

The Council drafted an initial vision statement and identified action-oriented goals to support the vision. Revisions were made to the vision and goals based on discussion and comments at the Council Meetings. The full Council unanimously adopted the vision and goals at their September and November 2009 meetings

The Coastal Georgia Council revisited the vision statement over the course of the planning process to ensure that all elements of the regional water plan were consistent with and complementary to the region needs, and to consider the information that became available during the water planning process. The following

vision statement for the region was adopted by the Council at the September 24, 2009 meeting.

4.1 Vision Statement – September 24, 2009

The Coastal Georgia Regional Water Planning Council seeks to conserve and manage our water resources in order to sustain and enhance our unique coastal environment and economy of Coastal Georgia.

The Coastal Council identified the following Goals for the region. These Goals were adopted by Council at the November 17, 2009 meeting. The Council revisited these Goals over the planning process but did not identify any necessary revision to the goals. It is important to note that the goals are not presented in order of priority.

4.2 Goals – November 17, 2009

- Manage and develop high quality water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial and agricultural water needs.
- Identify fiscally responsible and implementable opportunities to maximize existing and future supplies including promoting water conservation and reuse.
- Optimize existing water and wastewater infrastructure, including identifying opportunities to implement regional water and wastewater facilities.
- Protect and maintain regional recreation, ecosystems, and cultural and historic resources that are water dependent to enhance the quality of life of our current and future citizens, and help support tourism and commercial activities.
- Identify and utilize best available science and data and apply principles of various scientific disciplines when making water resource management decisions.
- Identify opportunities to manage stormwater to improve water quantity and quality, while providing for wise land management, wetland protection, and wildlife sustainability.