

**Apalachicola – Chattahoochee – Flint Stakeholders (ACFS)**

**Five-Year Planning Program:  
Goals, Objectives, and Plan Implementation Strategy**

By

ACFS Action Planning Committee

March 2011

## OUTLINE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. ACF STAKEHOLDERS
- III. PURPOSE OF THIS FIVE-YEAR PLANNING PROGRAM
- IV. THE PROPOSED PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE
- V. DRAFT PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
- VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS
- VII. CONCLUSIONS

### APPENDICES

**APALACHICOLA-CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT STAKEHOLDERS (ACFS)  
FIVE-YEAR PLANNING PROGRAM:  
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The ACF Stakeholders (ACFS) is a non-profit corporation created to provide a forum for diverse interests throughout the basin to work together to understand the water resources of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin and find collaborative solutions to their water management conflicts. The ACFS mission is to change the operation and management of the ACF Basin to achieve equitable and viable solutions among stakeholders that balance economic, ecological, and social values and ensure that the entire ACF Basin is a sustainable resource for current and future generations.

The ACFS Charter and By-Laws identified 14 general areas of stakeholder interest to be considered in its mission to provide sustainable water resources management in the ACF Basin. These functional areas have been aggregated for planning purposes into six major Planning Objectives to achieve the interests of the ACFS members to:

- A. Ensure and/or maintain adequate water supplies for public supply/municipal uses including wastewater assimilation needs of current and projected future populations.
- B. Maintain existing and promote future water availability and access for water dependent industries, power generation and recreational interests.
- C. Promote the optimization of the use of water for agricultural irrigation including: types of irrigation technology, selection of crops, sustainable and resource-based permitting and water withdrawal monitoring.
- D. Determine the nature and extent of commercial navigation that the ACF Basin can effectively support.
- E. Protect the natural systems and ecology of the ACF Basin by defining and implementing desired flow regimes and lake levels, water quality enhancements, including wastewater and stormwater management and best management practices to maintain a healthy natural system and support a productive aquatic ecosystem in the Basin and the estuary.
- F. Create and support relationships with local governmental institutions and other public bodies within the ACF Basin to promote sustainability of the water resources and also to enhance the historical and cultural resources of the basin related to the management of its water resources.

This document contains a Five-Year Planning Program, with objectives to achieve ACFS long-term goals, and a 2011 Annual Plan, with specific priorities for action to achieve near-term objectives, implementation steps and milestones.

The 2011 Annual Plan will focus on developing the Five-Year Planning Program and taking action on the following priorities, some of which require additional funding to complete. These action items are not in any priority order.

- A. 2011 priorities that can be accomplished within the current resources of ACFS include:
1. Develop and submit consensus comments to the draft USACE water control manual when released, submit consensus comments on the regional Georgia water plans when released, recommend that Alabama engage in water resources planning, and begin to review Florida water management plans as they affect the ACF Basin.
  2. Seek opportunities and provide consensus recommendations to the Governors of the States of Alabama, Florida and Georgia either in the context of implementation of Judge Magnuson's rulings in the Tri-States Water Rights Litigation or related to other interstate agreements.
  3. Create a "best practices" report, based on information collected from members regarding activities designed to improve water quality and increase conservation and water use efficiency.
  4. Create acceptance of the value of our grass-roots, basin-wide ACFS organization among key national, regional and state decision makers, including elected officials.
  5. Develop an overarching, Five-Year Planning Program, a conceptual guide or organizational "roadmap" of the long-term aspirations and commitments of the organization.
  6. Develop and implement a fundraising strategy for priority action items.
  7. Begin to investigate institutional options for basin-wide water resources planning and management.
  8. Evaluate options for sustainable organizational support for ACFS.
  9. Build on the needs matrices developed to date and engage in a dialogue that helps members understand one another's needs further and begins to define approaches for coming to a consensus on how the basin should be managed.
- B. 2011 priorities that require additional funding include:
10. Initiate an assessment of sustainable water resource management; develop an impartial, inclusive and transparent process for defining the water quantity and quality needs of the basin stakeholders, evaluate alternative water management scenarios, and reach consensus on one or more management alternatives.

11. Initiate an independent, science-based in-stream flow assessment to identify the flow regimes and lake levels necessary to sustain the physical, biological, and chemical integrity and health of the ACF Basin.<sup>1</sup>

ACF Stakeholders recognize that numerous public and private entities make decisions establishing plans, programs and policies that affect sustainable water management in the ACF Basin. Thus, ACFS works toward consensus recommendations to influence the plans and policies of others. This 2011 Annual Action Plan provides a framework for and set of objectives that ACFS recommendations will seek to achieve. ACFS also undertakes studies in partnership with, or with funding from, others. Thus, another purpose of this plan is to provide a description and rationale for cooperative efforts, in-kind support, and funding for ACFS recommended plans and programs and to enable related regional cooperation to benefit the ACF Basin as a whole. Finally, as part of implementing these objectives, ACFS will need to determine the most appropriate role for it to play in the management of the water resources of the ACFS Basin.

---

<sup>1</sup> The ACF System includes the aquatic and riparian habitat, and dependent biota within the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint rivers and tributary streams, hydraulically connected aquifers, reservoirs, and the Apalachicola Bay estuary.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

For over 30 years the States of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia and numerous interests within these States have sought a comprehensive and equitable management program for the ACF Basin. Moreover, the federal government through its various agencies has had a role in the use, allocation, development, protection, and management of the ACF Basin. However, at present the Basin is lacking a comprehensive management strategy to affect the optimum utilization of the water resources of the ACF Basin, or to identify and provide equity in the sometimes competitive water uses. As a result, the ACF Basin is a regionally and nationally significant, but under-managed natural resource.

Early efforts to develop a comprehensive management strategy for the entire System can be traced to an attempt by the State of Florida to have the U.S. Water Resources Council initiate a Level “B” study in 1978. This study was intended to justify the inclusion of the ACF Basin as a River Basin Commission under existing legislation. However, in 1980 Congress eliminated both the Water Resources Council and River Basins Commission authorizations. As a result, each of the three riparian states continued to be guided by individual State programs and by the needs and influence of their individual constituencies related to the river System. Moreover, most federal initiatives in place in 1980 have continued without substantial modification.

For the period 1980 to 2008 there were several attempts for the three States through their respective Governors and Environmental Agency heads to develop an ACF “Water Budget”, and to resolve various real or perceived competing issues relating to the water resources of the Basin. Some of the key issues have been: population growth and water use in the Atlanta, Georgia, metropolitan area; dependable navigation on the Congressionally authorized inland waterway system; the recreation authorization and low lake levels in West Point Lake; substantially increased agricultural water use in the Flint River Basin; shell fish productivity in the Apalachicola Bay estuary; water quality and habitat stabilization of the entire ACF Basin; and freshwater availability for new or expanding industries and power generation facilities in the Basin. The overriding management philosophy during this 28-year period appeared to be every person or program for themselves and, as such, no basin wide progress on any issue was adequately addressed and resolved. Operation of USACE reservoirs has been subject to litigation for 20 years.

A factor having potential to influence a basin wide approach to water resources management is the formation of the ACF Stakeholders organization, . The ACF Stakeholder group represents diverse interests in the tri-state region that organized to assess opportunities for joint agreement on non-litigation steps to provide an equitable and sustainable allocation of the water resources within the ACF Basin.

The ACF Stakeholders concept was introduced at a meeting in August 2008 where a small group of people who live, work and utilize the water resources of the ACF Basin met to explore the question - Can the diverse users of the ACF Basin act cooperatively and regionally with the goal of resolving those water resources issues? A follow up meeting including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was requested to determine their reaction to the formation of a group of stakeholders. Getting a positive response from the General commanding the South Atlantic region of the Corps and his staff, the group agreed that such an effort might work, and decided to convene a meeting of a broader set of stakeholders that represented most of the water and environmental stakeholder interests in the Basin. The U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR), an independent federal agency charged with resolving interstate disputes, was asked to provide facilitation services at subsequent meetings of stakeholders in the ACF Basin. The USIECR, using its own resources, held stakeholder forums throughout the Basin to determine the breadth of interest. The forums convinced USICR that such an effort would have positive results and would generate support from a larger, diverse group of representative individuals from all areas of the basin.

On March 2, 2009, 35 volunteers from throughout the ACF Basin, representing municipal, industrial, environmental, recreational and agricultural interests met as a Steering Committee to develop a mission statement, goals, an executive committee and workgroups. Since then, committees and workgroups have worked on financial, charter, stakeholder outreach and water resource issues to make the organization a membership funded 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is beginning to be recognized throughout the Basin as voice of reason and expertise that can provide valuable input and guidance to decision makers.

Currently there is an ACFS Governing Board of some 56 stakeholder members representing interests from all areas of the Basin. Efforts are primarily directed to developing recommendations that will be sent to the decision makers in the three states and federal government to establish an equitable and sustainable regional allocation of waters within the ACF Basin.

## **II. APALACHICOLA-CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT STAKEHOLDERS, Inc.**

The ACFS is a voluntary organization incorporated in Albany, Georgia, as a Section 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization of stakeholders within the Basin. While membership in the ACFS organization is open to stakeholders in any one of 14 interest categories (see list below at ii “Stakeholder Interests”); its Governing Board is limited to 56 Board Members, 14 from each of the four identified Sub-Basins of the ACF Basin.

The applicable sections of the ACFS Charter and By-laws, as of December 2010, can be found in Appendix A of this document.

### **III. PURPOSE OF THIS FIVE-YEAR PLANNING PROGRAM**

The principal purposes of this plan are to launch a routine planning process for ACFS actions, to establish a Five-Year Planning Program, and to prepare an annual work plan for the ACF Stakeholders. Together, the five-year planning program and annual plan are intended to provide a clear and concise understanding of the organization and its goals and objectives and to create a focus for action in the current year. Through this plan, ACFS begins to accomplish its mission of identifying opportunities for constructive change that will achieve sustainable water resource management of the ACF Basin.

This document provides:

- an organized planning process and plan for the implementation of management recommendations, while allowing for future modifications and/or additions to this Program and an approach securing adequate funding or services to accomplish the goals and objectives identified;
- draft goals and objectives for an initial Five-Year Planning Program for the period 1/1/2011 through 12/31/2016, that will be revised and approved during 2011 using the planning process described in section IV below. When approved, the Five-Year Planning Program will be attached as an Appendix to this program planning document;
- a proposed Annual Plan for 2011 that, when approved, also will be included as an Appendix. It will identify specific priorities for action in the coming year and describe the implementation steps needed to accomplish them; and
- a contingency planning process, with potential examples and a proposed approach if an unanticipated event occurs about which ACFS decides to take action.

### **IV. THE PROPOSED PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE**

ACFS will develop and then review and update its Five-Year Planning Program and one-year Action Plan on an annual basis using the following proposed planning process. This process uses the existing ACFS Charter structure of interest groups and standing committees, relying first on the contributions from the membership of the Charter's recognized 14 interest groups to recommend general planning objectives and actions, followed by contributions from standing committees and work groups to recommend specific priorities and proposed implementation steps for the coming year.

The proposed sequence of steps for this planning process in future years is as follows.

Step 1: Each of the four, sub-basin interest group coordinators will be asked on an annual basis to organize comments on the program planning objectives and plan actions in the Five-Year Planning Program for their specific interest area. (See Sections V and VI below for a menu of ideas for this first round, along with proposed clusters of the 14 ACFS interest groups.) A final list of three to five plan actions will be expected from each sub-basin interest group by August of each year to be used in updating the Five-Year Planning Program. If desired, interest groups also can recommend implementation priorities for the next year's annual plan.

Step 2: The Issues Committee will integrate these ideas into a revised five-year planning program and circulate it along with any recommended implementation priorities for the coming year to the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, Finance Committee, and any other applicable standing committee or work group

Step 3: Standing Committees will be asked to provide comments on the priority and feasibility of planning objectives to select for the coming year and to suggest specific implementation steps and milestones to include in the Annual Plan, prior to the Fall ACFS Governing Board meeting.

Step 4: The Issues Committee will organize these ideas to present to the Governing Board at the Fall meeting for discussion and input.

Step 5: The Issues Committee will revise the Five-Year Planning Program and draft an annual plan, consulting with the Executive Committee about assignment of lead responsibilities for the priority actions in the next year's annual plan and, then, will consult those standing committees or work groups, as appropriate, about the detailed implementation plans for each priority action.

Step 6: The Issues Committee will submit the draft Five-Year Planning Program and annual plan for review by the Executive Committee and then for approval by the Governing Board at the final meeting of each year.

Future 5-YEAR Program Development Milestones

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>
Step 1. Interest groups submit comments to Issues Committee on Plan Objectives and Actions (Five-Year Planning Program) and suggestions for priorities (Annual Plan).	Summer
Steps 2-3. Issues Committee integrates comments from standing committees about priority and feasibility for the Five-Year Planning Program and proposed implementation steps for the Annual Plan.	August and September
Step 4. Governing Board discusses and provides input to draft Five-Year Planning Program and Annual Plan	Fall meeting
Step 5: The Issues Committee will revise the Five-Year Planning Program and draft an annual plan, consulting with the Executive Committee about assignment of lead responsibilities for the priority actions and standing committees/work groups about implementation milestones, as appropriate	October – November
Step 6: Governing Board approves five year planning program and annual plan	Final meeting each year
Implement priorities in the annual plan in cooperation with appropriate agencies and others	January – December
Begin subsequent year's planning process	Summer

Note: The timetable for the 2011 Annual Plan varies from the proposed process for future years above. This year, it will be completed in February – March 2011, in parallel with the approval of this planning process.

## V. PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

The ACFS Charter and By-Laws identifies 14 general areas of interest to be considered in its mission to provide positive, enlightened, and equitable management of the Basin's water resources. These identified topical areas are aggregated into the following, proposed six major planning objectives.

Each of these six Planning Objectives is proposed as the general subject areas for the establishment of specific Plan Actions needed to address and or achieve them. When approved by the Governing Board, these will constitute the ACFS Five-Year Planning Program. Specific implementation steps and milestones will be developed for priority actions each year and will constitute the ACFS Annual Plan for the ensuing 12-month period

A proposed menu of specific plan 'action items' are listed under each of the six draft planning objectives. Interest groups and committees will be invited to comment on these objectives and associated action items, prior to approval of the Five-Year Planning Program by the Governing Board, to help determine relative priority and feasibility for accomplishing each of the identified planning objectives.

Note: Items B1 and E1 have an asterisk (\*) to indicate that these already have been approved by the Governing Board for inclusion in the initial 2011 Annual Action Plan. Also, the six major planning objectives and some of the draft action items below are meant to reflect what ACFS members seek to see achieved in the Basin, not as actions ACFS itself would undertake.

### **A. Ensure and/or maintain adequate water supplies for public supply/municipal uses, including wastewater assimilation needs, of current and projected future populations.**

#### Potential Action Items:

1. Develop an inventory and analysis of current municipal water supplies and projected future needs.
  - a. Inventory, evaluate, and publish a compendium of all public and industrial water supply/use plans which utilize waters from within the Basin.
  - b. Urge evaluation of the feasibility of additional alternative water supplies for projected water deficiencies including new supply sources, reuse, and demand reduction through water conservation and eliminating wasteful applications.
  - c. Encourage efficient water use mechanisms.
  - d. Develop an aggregate water supply assessment by sub-basin for the ACF Basin.
  - e. Determine net water withdrawal from the Basin for public water supplies, i.e. withdrawal less return flows.

2. Submit consensus comments to the draft USACE water control manual when released.
3. Submit consensus comments on the Georgia water plan when released.
4. Provide recommendations to the Governors of the States of Alabama, Florida and Georgia, as opportunities arise, either in the context of implementation of Judge Magnuson's rulings in the Tri-States Water Rights Litigation or related to other interstate agreements
5. Consider the feasibility and impact of new storage reservoirs.
6. Evaluate operating protocols to support municipal water supply.
7. Maximize existing reservoir storage capabilities for use during periods of limited water availability.
8. Recommend management strategies to sustain the current and future needs of municipal water supply.
9. Learn about the feasibility and impact of proposed aquifer storage and recovery projects.
10. Learn about the use of groundwater storage to augment stream flow during periods of extreme drought.

**B. Maintain existing and promote future water availability and access for water dependant industries, power generation, and recreational interests.**

Potential Action Items:

1. Initiate a sustainable water resource management assessment to develop an impartial, inclusive and transparent process to define the water quantity and quality needs of the basin stakeholders, evaluate alternative water management scenarios, and reach consensus on one or more management alternatives.\*
2. Build on the needs matrices developed to date and engage in a dialogue that helps members understand one another's needs further and begins to define approaches for coming to a consensus on how the basin should be managed.
3. Evaluate reservoir operating protocols to support industry water supply needs and recreation.
4. Survey Economic Development Authorities within the Basin to project the nature and extent of water demand for new and expanding industry and economic development within the areas of jurisdiction.
5. Investigate the potential for reuse of waters to support increased demands from current users.
6. Maximize existing reservoir storage capacities for use during periods of limited water availability.
7. Consider the feasibility and evaluate the impact of new storage reservoirs.

8. Optimize water management so that it does not impede the fishing and recreational values and water quality in the ACF.
9. Encourage efficient water use practices in this sector.
10. Learn about the feasibility and impact of proposed aquifer storage and recovery projects.
11. Learn about the use of groundwater storage to augment stream flow during periods of extreme drought.

**C. Promote the optimization of the use of water for agriculture irrigation including: type of irrigation technology, selection of crops, sustainable and resource-based permitting and water withdrawal monitoring.**

Potential Action Items:

1. Recommend management strategies to sustain the current and future water needs of agriculture
2. Identify new technologies employed world wide to gain production efficiency per unit of water application.
3. Develop recommendations for agriculture water use permitting that will sustain agriculture production while encouraging efficient agricultural water use practices.
4. Advocate for sustainable and resource-based groundwater yields through the establishment of minimum aquifer flows and levels
5. Learn about the use of groundwater storage to augment stream flow during periods of extreme drought.
6. Learn about the feasibility and impact of proposed aquifer storage and recovery projects.

**D. Determine the nature and extent of commercial navigation the ACF Basin can support.**

Potential Action Items:

1. Conduct an assessment of commercial navigation related interests within the Basin to specifically determine the market that exists for navigation and evaluate approaches to meet those needs.
2. Determine stream flow and levels needed to support a range of navigation activities on an annual and seasonal basis.
3. Investigate world wide commercial navigation practices where flows are not reliable for deep draft vessels.
4. Support and encourage the development of facilities to enhance recreational navigation within the ACF Basin.

5. Determine the impact of state and federal regulatory actions on the range of navigation activities on the river.
6. Determine the influence of navigation availability on rail and truck tariffs.
7. Provide an accurate assessment of the environmental impact of barge vs. rail and truck traffic.

**E. Protect the natural systems and ecology of the ACF Basin by defining and implementing desired flow regimes and lake levels, water quality enhancements, including wastewater and stormwater management and best management practices to maintain a healthy natural system and support a productive aquatic ecosystem in the Basin and the estuary.**

Potential Action Items:

1. Initiate an independent, science-based in-stream flow assessment to identify the flow regimes and lake levels necessary to sustain the physical, biological, and chemical integrity and health of the ACF Basin.\*
2. Develop an independent, science-based data set for use in setting ecological performance criteria that will be integrated into hydrological models.
3. Quantify the freshwater needs of the maintenance of productivity of the ACF Basin and develop operational applications to support those needs.
4. Conduct a sustainable water resources assessment to determine needed water allocations to support aquatic productivity and natural system ecology.
5. Quantify the freshwater needs to protect the water quality within the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint River systems as necessary for sustaining the system's biological integrity.
6. Determine what enhancements and best management practices in the ACF Basin are needed to improve water quality and ecosystem health.
7. Submit consensus comments on the regional Georgia water plans when released, recommend that Alabama engage in water resource planning, and begin to review Florida water management plans.
8. Consider the effects of climate change on the natural systems of the ACF Basin.
9. Learn about the use of groundwater storage to augment stream flow during periods of extreme drought.
10. Learn about the feasibility and impact of proposed aquifer storage and recovery projects.

- F. Create and support relationships with local governmental institutions and other public bodies within the ACF Basin to promote sustainability of the water resources and ecosystems, and also to enhance the historical and cultural resources of the basin related to the management of its water resources.**

Potential Action Items:

1. Create additional awareness of the ACFS organization among key governmental and elected decision makers.
2. Develop Memorandum of Cooperation with local governmental entities within the basin to identify and promote programs and projects which enhance water management related efforts currently underway or needed in the ACF Basin.
3. Investigate the potential for and impacts of improved institutional mechanisms for storm water management for all urbanized areas within the Basin.
4. Inventory and promote the preservation and/or restoration of historic and cultural facilities that represent the historical assets of the river related activities of past generations.
5. Develop newsletter for ACFS and place all local Governments, local special districts, and associated State and Federal agencies on mailing list to apprise them of Stakeholders Planning and Action Programs.
6. Monitor and inform the ACFS about efforts to protect cultural and heritage resources, such as the Chattahoochee Heritage Trail.

## **VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

ACF Stakeholders recognize that numerous public and private entities make decisions establishing plans, programs and policies that affect sustainable water management in the ACF Basin. Thus, a key consideration for ACFS in achieving the water resources planning objectives and actions above is to develop consensus recommendations to influence the plans and policies of others.

Successful implementation of several of ACFS' objectives also requires significant additional funding and paid personnel, both staff and consultants. Thus, ACFS will establish and implement an active, action-specific fund raising strategy, specifically tailored to seek funding, in-kind support and partners to implement its planning objectives and to enable related regional cooperation to benefit the ACF Basin as a whole. In addition, ACFS will explore organizational support options and the funding for them.

In addition, the ACFS Executive Committee should have the initial responsibility for coordinating Governing Board responses to unanticipated developments that may affect the interests of stakeholders in the basin, particularly if a rapid response is needed. Where more time is available, the Executive Committee may wish to refer

such an item to the Issues Committee or, if more appropriate, to another standing committee or work group to develop an initial response.

Numerous institutional configurations could assist in implementing the programmatic recommendations of this ACF Stakeholders Issues Resolution Action Plan. This plan can serve as the basis for recommendations and/or an ACFS statement of intent to be incorporated into their programs.

Options suggested for further consideration include the following. These options are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

- A General Consultant (Firm) and/or staffing to assist in the administration, development, implementation, and funding of this plan.
- An Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in all three States working together as a Watershed Improvement District.
- A cooperative program through an Association of all Resources Conservation and Development Districts (RC&Ds) within the Basin.
- An Association of all Regional Planning Councils or Districts in the Basin.
- A specifically created Basin Management Authority by the Legislatures of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.
- By a new program created through Federal Legislation specifically authorized to implement programs in the ACF Basin and identifying the ACF Stakeholders as its program advisory body.
- Or, by specific designation by USEPA, USDOJ or another federal agency to coordinate system-wide improvements under its authority and budget as a host agency, similar to the way EPA supports and administers its Gulf of Mexico Program. Here, the Federal Government Department provides the umbrella program for the member States to participate.
- Others to be defined.

The programmatic recommendations of the ACF Stakeholders will require significant amounts of external funds, including from federal agencies and any or all of the three States. Several external institutional options have the potential to provide adequate and consistent funding to implement ACFS plans, programs and policy guidance.

Options suggested for further consideration include the following. These options are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

- Select a Basin host government or governmental program to be the recipient of public funds for ACF Stakeholders plan implementation.
- Petition the three State legislatures to create an ACF Basin Authority and include the ACF Stakeholders planning recommendations as the legislative intent in the enabling legislation.
- Lobby the three State Congressional delegations to create an ACFS Program under an existing Federal agency to host the ACFS as an additional program responsibility. The ACFS Governing Board would select programs and projects to be submitted through the Agency Budget annually to the Congress.

- Others to be identified.

## **VII. CONCLUSIONS**

During the summer of 2010 it became universally obvious to the membership of the ACF Stakeholders that if it was going to have any meaningful impact on the water resources decisions in the ACF Basin and influence any of the multiple programs, authorities, and operational activities relating to ACF water resources management, it was going to have to define its areas of interests and establish a systematic direction for its initiatives. This Plan of Action is intended to provide that focus, to promote the consensus mission of the Stakeholders in order to achieve a level of optimum water resources management within the Basin, and to communicate these intentions to others.

The document, however, does not offer a comprehensive plan. Rather, it is intended to provide a format and protocol to establish a lasting and effective planning process. This process intentionally uses the existing Charter and its authorized organizational structure to drive the process. The draft planning objectives and proposed action items are suggestions to serve as a starting point for the proposed planning process.

The process outlined in this document is proposed to continue with improvements over the coming years so that the ACF Stakeholders have an ongoing mechanism to update the organization's plans to shape the water management applications throughout the Basin and achieve an optimal level of resource allocation and utilization for all interests through the entire Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint Basin.

## **APPENDICES**

- A. ACFS Charter and By-Laws
- B. 2011 Annual Plan (to be attached)

## **APPENDIX A.**

### *ACF Stakeholders Charter and Bylaws*

#### ***I. Preamble (Section I):***

*Whereas, citizens in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin desire to understand the water resources of the basin and find collaborative solutions to its water management conflicts. The ACF Stakeholders (ACFS) is a non-profit organization created to provide a forum for diverse interests throughout the basin to work together to achieve the Mission and Goals as stated in this Charter and Bylaws document.*

#### ***II. Mission and Goals (Section II):***

##### ***A. Mission***

*To change the operation and management of the ACF Basin to achieve:*

- a. Equitable solutions among stakeholders that balance economic, ecological, and social values.*
- b. Viable solutions that ensure that the entire ACF Basin is a sustainable resource for current and future generations.*

##### ***B. Goals:***

- a. To develop a consensus-based, basin-wide vision and a unified voice for the ACF Basin.*
- b. To enhance communication among stakeholders in the ACF Basin.*
- c. To develop and disseminate a common scientifically valid understanding of the ACF Basin, including the inter-related nature of water management in the basin, the needs of all of its stakeholders and the limitations of the system.*
- d. To implement solutions that are based on the best available technology and Science.*
- e. To pursue appropriate change to institutional structure, policies, and procedures in implementing the solutions set forth by this entity ACFS Charter and Bylaws.*

#### ***V. Membership (Section V of the Charter):***

*The ACFS will be inclusive and consist of three bodies: General Members, Associate Members and the Governing Board. The Governing Board will be comprised of a group of General Members selected by the General Membership by caucus as described below.*

##### ***A. General Members, Associate Members and the Governing Board***

###### ***a. General Members***

*The ACFS will consist of unlimited General Members. General Members are direct stakeholders as defined in this Charter and Bylaws. The General Members will meet formally once a year at the Annual Meeting, although members may attend and observe Governing Board meetings. Term limits for General Members are unlimited. General*

*Members will be organized according to two relationships. Each stakeholder's area of primary interest and their location within the ACF Basin will be defined during the applications process:*

***i. Sub-Basins***

*The ACFS consists of four (4) sub-basins (see Appendix A), including:*  
*(1) Upper Chattahoochee- The watershed and waters of the Chattahoochee River Basin that drain and may enter the river north of the USGS Franklin Gage at US 27 in Franklin GA.*

*(2) Middle and Lower Chattahoochee – All waters of the Chattahoochee watershed that enter the basin below the US 27 USGS Gage at Franklin GA, and end at the confluence of the Chattahoochee and the Flint rivers at Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam (UWLD).*

*(3) Apalachicola – The watershed and waters that drain into Apalachicola Bay including the Apalachicola River below JWLD, the Chipola River, and the New River basins.*

*(4) Flint – The Flint River Basin is delineated by the USGS National Hydrologic Database as all areas draining through the point of the confluence between the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers within Lake Seminole near Jim Woodruff Dam. This includes all areas on the Flint River and Spring Creek tributaries of Lake Seminole.*

***ii. Stakeholder Interests***

*Fourteen (14) Stakeholder Interests have been identified to participate in the ACFS deliberations and decision-making, including:*

- (1) Navigation*
- (2) Recreation*
- (3) Water Quality*
- (4) Water Supply*
- (5) Farm & Urban Agriculture*
- (6) Industry and Manufacturing*
- (7) Seafood Industry*
- (8) Hydro Power*
- (9) Thermal Power*
- (10) Local Government*
- (11) Environmental and Conservation*
- (12) Business and/or Economic Development*
- (13) Historic and Cultural*
- (14) Other*