

ACFS Governing Board Meeting

Albany, GA

Hilton Garden Inn

December 8 & 9, 2011

DRAFT – Pending Approval by GB

Welcome, Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda

The Governing Board (GB) meeting started at 10:00am. Dan Tonsmeire (Chair) welcomed the group and acknowledged the sponsors. Next, Gail Bingham (facilitator) asked those present to introduce themselves. Vince Falcione from the Flint caucus introduced Jeff Sinyard, chairman of the Dougherty County Commission, who welcomed ACFS to the area.

Next, Tonsmeire asked for comments on the agenda. ***Homer Hirt moved to adopt the agenda. Chad Taylor seconded the motion. The motion was approved by consensus.***

Old Business

Objective: *Approve September 2011 meeting notes. Complete any other old business.*

Advance materials: *ACFS September 12-13 Meeting Summary*

Tonsmeire asked for consideration of approval of the meeting summary from the GB meeting at Lanier Islands Resort in September (2011). ***Vince Falcione made a motion, with a second from Brad Currey, to approve the September meeting summary. The motion was approved by consensus.*** Chad Taylor noted the need to approve the meeting summary for the virtual meeting (October 27). Copies were provided later in the day for GB approval on Friday morning.

ACFS Annual Meeting

Objective: *Hear a report on the year's accomplishments.*

Advance materials: *2011 Annual Plan - one page; 2011 Financial Report*

Tonsmeire adjourned the Governing Board meeting and convened the ACFS Annual meeting.

Tonsmeire reported that there are no proposed changes to the ACFS Charter to consider this year. Next, he gave a report on 2011 activities of the organization. He referred to the 2011 Annual Plan and noted that the organization has completed or started on each of the 11 priorities identified in the 2011 plan. He reviewed the organization's work and status on each of the priorities. Next, Tonsmeire recognized the efforts of the Executive Committee and staff in the previous year. Tonsmeire concluded by saying that it is an honor to work with this organization and he looks forward to the organization's development of a Sustainable Water Management Plan and Instream Flow and Lake Levels Assessment (SWMP/IFLLA) for the ACF.

Next, Billy Turner gave the annual financial report. He referred to the 2011 Financial Report document in the pre-meeting packet. He noted the importance of revenue from grants to support the work of the organization. ACFS had approximately \$125,000 in expenses in 2011. 2011 revenues included carry over from 2010, approximately \$40,000 in dues and \$15,000 from local hosts for meeting. An additional

\$200,000 came from grants received in 2011, principally for the SWMP/IFLLA process that will continue into 2012. Turner asked Brad Currey to report on fund-raising activities.

Currey said that the ACFS members and caucuses have been good at identifying prospects, and he recognized the contribution of Coxe Curry Associates in assisting with fund-raising. To date, the organization has raised over \$600,000 and has an additional \$800,000 in requests outstanding. He believes that ACFS can raise over \$1 million, but must continue to work at fund-raising to get there. Next, Currey asked that each ACFS member make a donation in addition to their dues. He noted the importance to funders of having everyone involved in this process support the organization's work.

Currey noted that recent health issues may affect his ability to continue in his current fund-raising leadership role. He said that he intends to continue the fundraising for now but may need for someone to step up to fill that role in the future. He also noted the importance of identifying a source for recurring funding for the organization. The foundations that are providing support are willing to invest in start-up expenses, research, and modeling to support the development of the SWMP/IFLLA, but they are not willing to pay operating expenses on an ongoing basis.

Turner thanked Currey for his efforts. Turner said that the organization has done well in its fund-raising efforts so far. He said that ACFS is likely to be able to meet its \$1 million fund-raising goal, but he also said that it is possible that more may be needed.

Bill McCartney made a motion to accept the annual report and annual financial report, and Charles Stripling seconded the motion. The motion was approved by consensus.

Next, Tonsmeire presented a draft resolution to express appreciation to Coxe Curry Associates for their assistance with ACFS fund-raising. ***Billy Turner made a motion to approve the resolution, and it was seconded by Joe Brown.*** It was suggested that the Executive Committee could edit the wording of the expression of appreciation, as needed. ***The motion was approved by consensus.***

The meeting was opened to general comments from ACFS members:

- The importance of being able to demonstrate to potential funders that all Governing Board members have made donations was emphasized.
- The importance of tracking expenses in accordance with any conditions on the grants and their purpose was acknowledged.
- It was clarified that the grants that have been awarded can be used to pay for the work of the consultants.
- The success of progress toward the fund-raising goal and the strength of the organization's case statement and mission were recognized.
- An article prepared by the Education Committee recently appeared in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*.
- The importance of expanding the general membership was emphasized. Governing Board members were encouraged to consider venues to presentations about the organization to support education about and recruitment to ACFS.

Tonsmeire closed the Annual Meeting with recognition of the efforts of the Governing Board.

New Business

Objective: *Approve 2012 budget, authorize EC to enter into professional services contracts, ratified new officers, and look ahead to plans for 2012.*

Advance materials: *ACF Stakeholders Budget 2012 draft; Professional Services Team memo November 28, 2011*

Billy Turner presented the proposed ACFS Budget for 2012. He explained the Professional Services Team memo, which includes cost estimates and describes the roles for Gail Bingham, Kristin Rowles, and Mark Masters. It was noted that the EC has endorsed the proposed 2012 ACFS budget. ***Wilton Rooks made a motion and Billy Mays seconded the motion to approve the 2012 budget.***

In the discussion of the motion, a question was raised about the adequacy of 2012 funding for the SWMP and IFLLA. In response, it was noted that funds have been raised in excess of what is in the proposed budget since the budget was prepared by the Finance Committee, and these funds along with future grants can be directed to those purposes as the funds become available and the detailed SWMP/IFLLA work plan is developed. Limits on spending on organizational needs and facilitation were discussed, and Turner clarified the sources of funding for the Professional Service Team. Turner said that the only expenses from the organizational needs category at this time are \$68,200 for administrative services as described in the Professional Services Team memo. Tonsmeire further clarified the design of the Professional Services Team and noted that the approach will allow for some flexibility.

Chad Taylor clarified that The University Collaborative (TUC) funding is included under Other Contracts in the budget.

A caution was raised about funding recurring expenses with non-recurring funding. Tonsmeire noted that how the organization operates may change significantly in the future and supporting current operations from dues alone would greatly limit ACFS' activities. Turner observed that the SWMP/IFLLA and work on institutional mechanisms is a surge effort for the next two to three years. If the ACFS is successful, the institutional arrangements and funding sources may change significantly.

The motion for 2012 budget approval was approved by consensus.

Next, Tonsmeire recommended that the GB authorize the EC to contract with the professional services team based on November 28, 2011 memorandum. ***Ellis Cadenhead made a motion to authorize the EC to contract with professional services team based on November 28, 2011 memorandum. Brad Currey seconded the motion. The motion was approved by consensus.*** It was clarified that the motion did not approve the contract, but the motion authorized the EC to enter into such a contract.

Next, Tonsmeire reported that the EC membership will stay the same in 2012 as in 2011. The officers are proposed to be:

Chair – Charles Stripling

Vice Chair – Billy Turner

Treasurer – Jim McClatchey

Secretary – Greg Elmore

A motion to ratify the proposed EC officers for 2012 was made by Chad Taylor and seconded by David Dixon. The motion was approved by consensus.

Charles Stripling took over the meeting as Chair. He recognized Dan Tonsmeire's efforts as chair with the presentation of a plaque in appreciation of his services.

Next, Stripling said that he takes on this role with great humility. He noted the complexity of the organization and its mission. He acknowledged that most of the organization's founders are still active in the organization and supporting the organization in achieving the original vision. Stripling said that his plans focus on implementing the ACFS Annual Plan and the Five Year Planning Program. He emphasized the importance of initiating the SWMP/IFLLA process. He also recognized the importance and talents of the new Professional Services Team, and he emphasized their team approach. He asked for feedback on the team's efforts in the coming year.

Stripling said that ultimately the decisions that need to be made about the SWMP/IFLLA will have to come from the GB. To do so, he emphasized the importance of openness in the process. The members and caucuses need to share their perspectives. He said that the reason we are here is because we do not have agreement, and we need to face our disagreements. He noted that openness is both about sharing one's perspective and also about being open to what others are saying. Stripling said that if everyone is committed to the work, he can accept disagreement that might preclude consensus, as long as we all have been actively involved and listening to each other, but we must do our best to listen and learn from one another first.

As an example, Stripling noted how his working relationship with Brad Currey has grown over the years that they have known each other, largely because of what they have learned from one another when exploring different views. Next, Stripling emphasized the importance of donations from the members for the fund-raising campaign, and he encouraged members to make their contributions in honor of Brad Currey. Stripling concluded by saying that he is looking forward to serving as ACFS Chair and working together with the members, and he emphasized that we all will rise or fall together.

LUNCH

Information Session: Agricultural Water Use and Conservation in the Flint

Mark Masters from Albany State University (Flint River Water Planning and Policy Center) made a presentation about agricultural water conservation. The slides are available on the ACFS website. Masters reviewed the growth in irrigated agriculture in Southwest Georgia over the past few decades, primarily in row crop production. He explained how irrigation is an important risk management tool for farmers, and it greatly increases production. Dry land farming carries a much higher level of financial risk. Masters estimated that irrigation provides a benefit of \$31.18 to \$57.31 per acre-inch applied. In Southwest Georgia, irrigated acreage makes up more than half of the tax digest in most counties. Irrigated agriculture is the major economic driver of the region.

Masters reported that challenges for the irrigated agriculture in the Flint include the tri-state water conflict and endangered species protection requirements. The recently completed regional water planning process in Georgia helped to improve the information base on which we plan and manage agricultural water use.

There are approximately 1.5 million acres of permitted irrigated agriculture in Georgia. Permits for agricultural withdrawals have been issues in Georgia since 1998. Permits indicate the maximum acreage that can be irrigated from that permit, but do not indicate the field locations. Moreover, permits indicate a maximum pumping rate, but do not specify a total withdrawal quantity.

Next, Masters summarized the Flint River Drought Protection Act (which provides for an auction for irrigation suspension during drought), the Agricultural Water Use Metering program in Georgia, the Flint River Water Development and Conservation Plan (2006), the Water Stewardship Act (2010), and the Lower Flint-Ochlockonee and Upper Flint regional water plans (2011).

Masters said that irrigated agriculture in this region has already adopted a substantial amount of conservation measures. The Flint River Drought Protection Act and state emergency powers provide tools to reduce agricultural withdrawals during drought. Other possible future measures include augmentation, statute changes for permitting, permit modification and/or revocation, and demand management.

Q. Why does Grady County have a low level of irrigated acreage relative to other counties in the region?

A. Grady County is outside of the Dougherty Plain of the Floridan Aquifer, and so access to groundwater is more limited there.

Q. How well do we understand the relationship between surface water and groundwater?

A. We have a good understanding of it, but we could know more.

Q. Is nutrient enrichment an issue in this region?

A. We have not seen major nutrient issues here. We generally have good riparian buffers.

Stripling concluded the discussion by noting the importance and value of agricultural water use in this region.

SWMP/IFLLA Update

Objective: *Presentation of the proposed work plans for the SWMP/IFLLA project, consultants' coordination plans, and Task 1 deliverables based on results of the project initiation meeting on November 28. Discuss next steps.*

Advance materials: *SWMP/IFLLA Project Initiation Meeting Summary (with attachments); IFA SOW Sep 2011 final draft*

Bingham introduced this agenda item by noting the extensive activity on these projects in the past month since the GB's final decision on contracting was made. She said that the contracts were signed, the consultants began work, and the caucuses assigned representatives to participate in a project initiation meeting (November 28). She said that today the consultants would present the path forward for this project.

Next, Steve Simpson from Black & Veatch (B&V) made a presentation about the SWMP workplan. The slides are available on the ACFS website. Simpson noted that the original project schedule will change due to funding schedules and input from the GB at the September meeting, but that the schedule diagram is a good indication of work flow among the tasks. B&V is working on Task 1 now. Simpson summarized the eight tasks in the proposed workplan from B&V, reviewed the deliverables from each task, and addressed how B&V and Atkins will work together. He said that they are already coordinating on ensuring compatibility on modeling and scheduling. Simpson answered questions about the SWMP:

Q. To what extent is the workplan already spelled out?

A. We are putting the meat on the bones of the proposed workplan, while considering time and budget constraints. We are making adjustments in the proposed workplan and adding details to it to break the tasks into smaller pieces. There is still a fair amount of "architectural" work to be done on the workplan.

Q. Has Task 4 started?

A. The data review for IFLLA is part of Task 4, and Atkins has started that work.

Q. Where do I take questions and concerns about the technical work?

A. The new oversight work group (to be discussed next on the agenda) will be a focal point for input. Brad Moore, the interim chair of that group, will discuss this further. We (the consultants) also welcome input directly.

Q. Will your work be in a format useful to the U.S. Corps of Engineers (Corps)?

A. Dr. Georgakakos can address this in more detail at future meetings. Georgakakos will be using the ResSim model (used by the Corps) in parallel with his own model to build confidence in the similarity of the results from the two models. Also, we will be examining the unimpaired flow record that will be an input to the model and discussing this data with the Corps. We understand the need to make the results of the SWMP/IFLLA relevant and accessible to the Corps.

Q. Do you think that the unimpaired flow records are wrong?

A. Dr. Georgakakos believes that there are improvements that can be made in that dataset. We will work with you to decide if making improvements will be worthwhile in this process.

Q. Can you make the modeling work of Dr. Georgakakos more accessible to us?

A. Yes, we understand the need to translate the technical work into a more understandable format.

Q. Are the different models really expected to provide the same results?

A. We will be using the same inputs in two different models. Calibration of the models will be a factor. The results may not be exactly the same, but they should be similar, if the inputs are the same.

Q. Models depend on the inputs, and there are different perspectives on the accuracy of the inputs. How can we get to agreement on scientifically-acceptable inputs?

A. Task 4 is devoted to the inputs development. We will seek the best information we can find. A progressive approach in which we are adding more variables as we go will allow us to understand the sensitivity of the model to various inputs, so that we can focus on those variables that are most important to the results. Some variables might not be as important in terms of their impact on the results as others.

Q. Will the model results be useful to the state governments? Will we be able to use them in discussions with the three state governments about future management?

A. Yes, and we need to discuss how and when to involve the states in the discussion.

Next, Tom Singleton from Atkins made a presentation about the IFLLA workplan and on-going literature review. Singleton's slides are available on the ACFS website. Atkins work relates to Task 4 in the workplan that Simpson described. Singleton emphasized the need to develop common definitions early in the process. Singleton noted that it is important that the GB members tell the consultants when they do not understand something.

First, Singleton said that environmental flow assessments determine the amount of water available for human use from a particular source and establish the limit at which further water withdrawals will cause significant harm to the water resources of an area and the related natural environment. He said that the word "limit" is important because establishing limits puts sustainability into the plan.

A comment was made to clarify that ACFS defines sustainability in terms of social, economic, and environmental factors.

The environmental flows assessment includes water levels of rivers and lakes and salinity changes in estuaries. It is protective of flora and fauna and the natural storage of water to support human use. The assessment will help to determine the necessary inundation regime to protect flora and fauna communities.

Singleton reviewed the process for developing environmental flows. The first step is to identify resource management targets (e.g., sturgeon, Halloween and blackbanded darters, freshwater mussels, cypress swamps, oysters, seagrass). Next, the relationships between targets and inundation regimes need to be identified. Singleton emphasized that identification of the important periods of inundation will address more than low flows; high and medium flows also need to be addressed. An environmental flow is a set of numbers, not a single number.

Singleton said that the data inventory will be complete by the end of this month (December). He provided an example (in his slides) of what the inventory will look like. Later IFLLA tasks include developing the IFA for the Apalachicola and developing a conceptual approach to IFA if data is inadequate for the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers. Singleton said that it is possible that ACFS will not need environmental flows established for the whole Flint and Chattahoochee systems, but instead, focused on specific, important points (e.g., the USGS nodes). He said that Atkins will provide a clear roadmap of the steps needed to develop environmental flows. Singleton answered questions about the IFLLA:

Q. Largemouth bass populations require a particular lake level regime. Will you be looking at targets like that?

A. It depends. It will be driven by the availability of data.

Q. The words “lake levels” were inserted into the project name at last meeting. Is there enough data to do this? How will it be addressed?

A. Natural lakes and reservoirs are different. If you are seeking to put some kind of limit on reservoir levels, it might be through a different approach other than environmental flows.

Q. Water withdrawals and consumptive use are two different things. How will you get information on consumptive use?

A. Consumptive uses can be defined or estimated based on permit and other information. For the model, withdrawals and returns are defined for most uses.

Q. What do you do about droughts and floods in the environmental flows assessment? Will we lose species when these events occur?

A. The ability to meet minimum flows under severe conditions is compromised. The assessment will help you to identify, at the extremes, the range of management practices that you should be taking to minimize the adverse impacts to environmental resources.

Q. Will the environmental flows limits be defined in a way that helps us to know what we would lose when we do not meet them?

A. Yes, and the results may sometimes be counter-intuitive.

Q. To what extent will you be addressing concerns about environmental flows in the Chattahoochee and Flint, including water quality issues?

A. We will be addressing major issues of concern, dependent upon the availability of data.

In closing the discussion on the SWMP and IFLLA presentations from the consultants, two comments were made:

- The complexity of the discussion will require new ways to collect and answer questions from participants.
- We need to jump to the end and identify the “killer” issues now so that we can make sure the process addresses them as we go.

SWMP/IFLLA Technical Oversight Work Group

Objective: *Approve formation of a SWMP/IFLLA Technical Oversight Work Group.*

Advance materials: *Technical Oversight Work Group Charge*

Charles Stripling introduced Brad Moore, who is serving as interim chair of the Technical Oversight and Coordination Work Group. He referred to the proposed Technical Oversight and Coordination Work Group (TOCWG) charge in the meeting materials. ***Dan Tonsmeire made a motion to approve the charge, and Frank Stephens seconded the motion.***

Moore reviewed the charge. The work group responsibilities will include: (1) technical liaison between ACFS and the contractors, (2) contractor oversight, and (3) communication about the project to/from EC and GB members. The TOCWG will operate by consensus. The charge addresses the membership of the workgroup, selection of members, and leadership. It also describes that the work group will report to the EC through the TOCWG chair. The EC has the authority to provide detailed instructions to the work group in order to further the purposes of ACFS.

Each caucus will identify two members and an alternate for the work group. The members of the work group identified themselves by a show of hands. It was clarified that one does not have to be a work group member to participate in work group meetings and discussions. Alternates are encouraged to participate in all calls and meetings, but decisions will be made by the eight primary members (on a consensus basis).

The following clarifications were made:

- The TOCWG will review invoices and make recommendations on their payment to the EC.
- Members of the group can be general members who are not GB members.

The following comments were made:

- The work group membership may need to change as the subject matter changes over time.
- The TOCWG and the process need to be designed to ensure that we do not have major hiccups at the end of the process.
- There are multiple ways for the GB members to interact with the SWMP/IFLLA process through the TOCWG and at GB meetings as well.
- We need to organize the schedule to minimize substantive decisions between GB meetings so that we can get the GB approval. The EC will assist in providing direction to the TOCWG.
- It would be helpful to examine (as a part of the SWMP/IFLLA) the impacts of removing hydrologic modifications (that have already been made) to the system to understand the sensitivity of the results to such structural modification.

Q. If we have an idea for the SWMP/IFLLA, how do we get it before the TOCWG for consideration?

A. We will be having discussions in the GB, and the caucuses will have discussions with their TOCWG members to provide for input and reporting. It is possible that we will decide we need to have interest group meetings as well in some cases.

Charles Stripling called the question. *The motion for the TOCWG charge was approved by consensus.*

BREAK

Update from Reservoir Study Work Group

Objective: *Hear report of the work group.*

Wilton Rooks, chair of the Reservoir Study Work Group, gave a status report from the work group. The slides are available on the ACFS website. He noted that the initial discussion focused on raising Lake Lanier's full pool by two feet. He said that the objections to this idea heard along the way included: water grab by Atlanta, attempt to keep more water from downstream users, required changes to water allocations, major flood control allocation impact, and use of the additional water. Given these objections, the work group decided to apply the study to all reservoirs. Objections to this proposal included: the SWMP could run models to show the impact of higher storage in reservoirs, how additional water stored would be used, too much on our platter already, and WCM Work Group should deal with it. The work group sought to produce a motion that would honor the concerns that have been heard and move us into a more productive dialogue with the Corps of Engineers on specific issues. However, Rooks said that the work group ran out of time and recommends passing the issue of how to address additional reservoir storage to other existing work groups to address (e.g., WCMWG, TOCWG).

Comments on Rooks' report included:

- There is political momentum in Georgia to build more reservoirs, and the Governor has set aside a large pool of funds to develop new reservoirs. Raising the full pool level of existing reservoirs seems to be more environmentally acceptable than building new reservoirs.
- For West Point Lake, raising the summer full pool (635 feet) might not be desirable, but raising the winter full pool (628 feet) might be.
- We need to examine the reservoir issues, but we need facilitation. We have a lot of other priorities now, and we ran out of time in this discussion. We need to consider how to work with the Corps of Engineers on this issue. We do not need to give up now; we were almost there.
- We labored hard in trying to reach a consensus. We learned the benefit of having a facilitator (by not having one), but ACFS has limited funds for facilitation.
- Storing more water would seem to be good in general, but we need to better understand the costs and impacts.
- The original intent was to request that the Corps of Engineers evaluate potential impacts of raising full pool levels.
- We need to understand how additional storage in existing reservoirs can be looked at in the SWMP model. The work group has begun to explore this question with the consultants. The technical consultants have indicated that their work will address some, but not all impacts.

Rooks said that he recommends that we put this discussion on hold for now and work through the SWMP process and see what we learn. He said that other organizations may continue to pursue the proposal of raising Lanier's full pool, but not with ACFS support at this time. There was some interest from GB members in continuing to develop consensus on the work group's motion. Stripling suggested that the work group try to develop consensus on the motion that evening.

The Work Group planned to assemble that evening after Gordon Rogers' presentation.

Issues Committee: 2012 Annual Plan and Five Year Planning Program Update

Objectives: *Review, revise as needed and approve the 2012 Annual Plan and updates to the Five-Year Planning Program.*

Advance Materials: *2012 ACFS Annual Plan – Draft November 2011; ACFS Five Year Planning Program – Draft November 2011*

Frank Stephens referred first to the Five Year Planning Program document. Changes in the document from last year's version were marked. He reviewed the process of developing the document and collecting input for changes and prioritization. Stephens reviewed the proposed changes starting on page 12. He noted that edits on pages 4-5 reflect changes related to the development of the 2012 Annual Plan, which will be discussed next. ***Brad Moore made a motion to approve the revised Five Year Planning Program document as presented (not including Annual Plan changes on pages 4-5). Jerri Russell seconded the motion.***

Summary of discussion:

- It was suggested that “population explosion” be changed to “population growth” (page 15).
- It was clarified that the statement explaining the meaning of asterisks was no longer accurate. It will be revised.
- It was clarified that the GB not the consultants will reach consensus on one or more management alternatives (page 13, item B.2). The text should read that the consultants will assist the GB in reaching consensus on management alternatives.
- The document should be edited with an eye to how potential funders might read it.
- In E.1, change “unimpaired flows” to “unimpaired/baseline flows” (page 15). The unimpaired flows dataset removes the impact of consumptive use. It was suggested that we need a term that represents the portion of unimpaired flows that is pre-impoundment, pre-irrigation, and pre-population growth.
- Add “reservoir levels” to item A.1.b on page 12.

Bingham reviewed the changes that were suggested (see list above). She noted that pages 4-5 will be adjusted to reflect the new annual plan. ***The motion to approve the Five Year Planning Program document, with the discussed modifications to the text, was approved by consensus.***

Next, Tim Thoms made a motion to approve the 2012 Annual Plan. Jerri Russell seconded the motion. Stephens reviewed the 2012 Annual Plan document.

Summary of discussion:

- A comment was made that “verification” of water needs in item #9 is not included in the current scope of work for the consultants, but it was recommended that this not be changed in the plan and ACFS should try to identify funding to do this.
- Re-numbering of the priorities was suggested: change #9 to #1, change #10 to #2, and change #2 to #3. Re-number the other priorities accordingly.
- It was clarified that work groups report to the EC throughout the year and receive direction from the EC on progress toward plan priorities.
- The cost estimates do not relate clearly to budget numbers. Consistency is needed. It was proposed that all estimated cost should be noted as TBD.
- The Do-Better Work Group is discussing non-regulatory practices for agriculture. It was suggested that #11 on page 4 be changed to add consideration of non-regulatory practices as well as permitting for agricultural water use. This change would be needed in the Five Year Planning Program as well as the 2012 Annual Plan.

- The University Collaborative is the correct name (not the University Collaboration).
- A comment was made that item 11 is not currently in the budget. It was suggested that this item should be a target for 2013, and ACFS should focus on the SWMP/IFLLA in 2012. In response, it was clarified that the Do-Better Work Group was going to focus on #11. It was generally agreed that if someone is taking the lead on this item, then it could stay in the Annual Plan. The Do-Better Work Group will take ownership of the item.

Bingham reviewed the changes that were suggested (see list above). ***The motion to approve the 2012 Annual Plan, with the discussed modifications to the text, was approved by consensus.***

Stephens reminded the GB members to think about items to propose for the Five Year Planning Program document for the future.

Public Comment

Janet Llewellyn, Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Llewellyn thanked the GB for inviting her agency to attend the meeting. She said that she is very impressed with the caliber, talent, and fund-raising of ACFS, and she said that the states can use ACFS' help.

BREAK FOR THE DAY

Reconvene Governing Board Meeting

Objective: *Reflection from Day One; Review agenda for today.*

Stripling opened the meeting at 8:05am with reference to an article in that morning's *Albany Herald* about the ACFS meeting. Next, he listed three ideas that he felt were important from the November 28th Project Initiation Meeting for the SWMP/IFLLA:

- Divergence will become greater as we gather data initially; we will need to work to bring ourselves back together.
- Keep the obstacles in mind at all times.
- If you are not using water as efficiently as possible, then it is a want and not a need.

Next, Bingham noted a few additions to the day's agenda (approval of virtual meeting summary, an update from the Reservoir Study Work Group, and further discussion of Masters' presentation on agricultural water use and conservation).

Information Session: River, Climate and Weather Forecast in the ACF Basin

Objectives: *Update from River Forecast Center and USGS WaterSMART.*

Tonsmeire introduced three speakers:

- John Feldt, *River Forecast Center*
- Chad McNutt, *NIDIS*
- Ed Martin, *USGS WaterSMART Program*

John Feldt, River Forecast Center

Feldt gave a briefing on current and projected drought and streamflow conditions. His slides are available on the ACFS website. He reviewed recent rainfall conditions in the Upper Chattahoochee (above Lake Lanier) and noted that there has been some recent enhanced rainfall inflow to Lanier. The southern part

of the ACF Basin has had well below normal rainfall levels in the past year. Streamflow conditions in the southern part of the basin are very low. Streamflow has been low in the Flint since spring, and some flows have been record low flows this year in the Flint.

Feldt said that the current drought monitor shows that an area of extreme drought has been centered over Southwest Georgia for several months. Feldt says that this drought has the possibility of attaining the same level of intensity as the drought in 2007-2008. For Lake Lanier, Feldt said that the lake level has not increased as much as it normally would with the recent rainfall amounts because the dry soil there is creating conditions that decrease runoff inflow to the lake.

Feldt noted the importance of the winter recharge season for providing consistent inflow to the ACF system and refilling reservoirs. La Niña conditions are expected to cause a dry recharge season this year. Climate models show a shift to neutral conditions in the spring, but Feldt expressed a lack of confidence in those projections at this time. Based on his analysis of rainfall conditions in the ACF, Feldt questions whether the 2007-2008 drought ever really ended in the region.

Feldt discussed “double-dip” La Niña (two year duration). He said that usually the second year results in much drier conditions. Next, he explained Arctic Oscillation (AO). He said that a strong negative AO during the recharge season will enhance La Niña, but a positive AO could result in wetter conditions. Weather factors such as AO can override or enhance La Niña conditions.

Feldt shared streamflow predictions for January 1 to March 31 based on current conditions. The predictions call for a high probability of below normal streamflow (60-70% probability) in the ACF.

Feldt made the following summary points:

- La Niña will dominate this winter. Generally, this will continue to reinforce reduced rainfall and overall drought across the Southeast U.S.
- AO can tend to either enhance or override the La Niña signal.
- Extremely low stream flow and soil moisture will reduce inflows.
- Very tight rainfall gradient over basin north of Lake Lanier.
- A switch to El Niño by next fall; the record of the last decade would favor an end of the 2010-12 drought.

Feldt referred to the River Forecast Center’s website (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/serfc/>) for those wanting more information. He publishes a blog that provides on-going updates on that <http://blog.citizen.apps.gov/SERFCJournal/>

Chad McNutt, NIDIS

Next, Chad McNutt provided a presentation on the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS). His slides are available on the ACFS website. McNutt said that NIDIS held two meetings in the ACF last week: the Southeast Drought Outlook Forum (Dec. 1) and a NIDIS ACF Pilot Update Meeting (Dec. 2).

The goal of NIDIS is to try to provide a more proactive approach to managing drought risks and impacts. Its objectives include: to coordinate drought monitoring and forecasting systems, to provide an interactive drought information clearinghouse, and to support coordinated preparedness and planning. NIDIS maintains its information clearinghouse at <http://www.drought.gov>.

NIDIS is working to develop an early warning system for drought with three pilots (California, Colorado River Basin, and ACF). Development of the ACF Pilot started in 2009. He summarized some of the presentations from the Drought Outlook Forum. He noted that this coming recharge season will be crucial for the ACF. Drought is likely to persist in the ACF. He said that AO conditions are erratic and difficult to predict. He said that this year's La Niña is weaker than last year's. He said that there are slight odds of a triple-dip La Niña, but there is a 66% chance of El Niño instead.

Next, McNutt provided an update on pilot for an early warning system for drought in the ACF. The pilot project has formed two committees: (a) Data and (b) Education & Outreach. Additionally, the pilot project is holding webinars on about a monthly basis.

McNutt took questions from the GB:

Q. With what degree of confidence can a drought declaration be made on March 1 (as called for in the Flint River Drought Protection Act)?

A. It is generally more difficult to predict drought conditions in the spring. I would try to evaluate in February whether we will see continued La Niña.

Q. When was the last triple-dip La Niña?

A. I can get back to you with an answer.

Ed Martin, USGS WaterSMART Program

Next, Ed Martin reported on the USGS Georgia Water Science Center and the USGS Water SMART program in the ACF. His slides are available on the ACFS website.

Martin said that the ACF is one of three systems selected for the WaterSMART program to implement a collaborative and focused assessment of water availability. The WaterSMART program in the ACF has three teams focused on: (1) water use assessment, (2) integrated surface-groundwater modeling, and (3) ecological flow assessment. In the ecological flows assessment, Mary Freeman from USGS will be focused on the flow needs of freshwater mussels in the Lower Flint.

The ACF WaterSMART program started in October 2011. There was a planning meeting in June 2011. It will be a three year project (2012-2014). Funding will likely be approximately \$300,000 for the water component and \$200,000 for the ecological component. This reflects a recent funding cut that will result in reductions in the workplan.

On January 11, 2012, a stakeholder meeting for the WaterSMART project in the ACF will be held at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve. Mark Masters will forward information on this meeting to the GB. The meeting will be available by webcast.

Martin answered questions from the GB:

Q. Will the WaterSMART model address returns from uses such as landscape watering and septic systems?

A. We have a procedure that we believe can make a valid estimate of return flows from septic systems.

Q. Where will the work on groundwater-surface water interactions be focused? Will it be an improvement of prior models?

A. This task will be focused on Lower Flint (similar to Subarea 4 study of 1990's). We will be able to use improved information on agricultural withdrawals from the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Q. Can you share preliminary data and work products from the ACF WaterSMART project with ACFS as they are developed?

A. Yes, we can do that.

Q. Is the ecological flows assessment an instream flows study of the Lower Flint? Will that data be available to us?

A. It is a fairly sophisticated study. Yes, we can share the data as it is developed.

Q. What will the granularity be in the groundwater-surface water interaction model? Will it be able to show the impact of individual wells?

A. Yes, the model can show impacts of withdrawals at any point in system.

Q. When will you know more about the WaterSMART budget?

A. It depends on when there is agreement on federal budget. This is a new program; it can only be partially funded if we continue to operate under a continuing resolution on the federal budget.

Martin concluded that USGS wants to dovetail the ACF WaterSMART project with the technical work that ACFS is doing. Stripling encouraged ACFS member to attend the January 11 stakeholder meeting; he said that he would like to see each caucus represented at that meeting.

Update from the Reservoir Study Work Group

Wilton Rooks reported that the work group met but did not reach consensus on a recommendation the night before. He commented that the importance of Lake Lanier to entire basin was highlighted in the morning's presentations from NOAA. He said that as an organization, we are in the process of developing messages that we want to deliver to the Corps of Engineers, and we need to determine how we want to present these messages to the Corps. He suggested that the EC might want to discuss how to proceed in communicating these messages.

Rooks recommended that the GB put the work of the Reservoir Study Work Group on hold for now and get to work on SWMP and IFLLA process and in the WCM Work Group. He suggests that the GB revisit this issue after a few months. He said that the Lake Lanier Association will continue to pursue this issue on its own.

Rooks noted that he had drafted a short motion, which he had shared with work group members this morning. Rooks was asked to read his draft motion: *The ACFS supports a study of the action zone levels of Lake Lanier, West Point Lake, and Walter F. George Lake to determine if changes to those action zone levels would be beneficial to the operation and management of the waters of the ACF Basin.*

A comment was made about the importance of evaluating the flood control impacts of raising full pool reservoir levels. Concern was expressed that current flood control in the Chattahoochee is not adequate, and raising the full pool would affect flood control. It was clarified that it is anticipated that flood control impacts would be evaluated as a part of the study that the motion would recommend.

It was emphasized that ACFS needs to work with the federal agencies to build a constructive dialogue. In particular, the need for a strategy for ACFS communication with the Corps was noted.

A GB member asked for clarification of Chattahoochee flood control concerns. It was noted that West Point and Columbus suffer the effects of floods. A presentation on flood impacts was suggested for the Columbus GB meeting in 2012.

It was suggested that the ACFS evaluate aquifer storage in the SWMP process.

Open Discussion

Objectives: *Complete any unresolved decisions carried over from Day One. Address additional topics that arose during the meeting.*

Billy Mayes made a motion, with a second from Greg Elmore, to approve the meeting summary from the Virtual Meeting (October 27, 2011). The motion was approved by consensus.

Next, Jim McClatchey made a comment about the presentation by Mark Masters on agricultural water use and conservation. He said that it was a mistake to emphasize the economic impact of the groundwater in this region, since the Atlanta region can make a larger economic impact argument with respect to water, and noted that water is lifeblood everywhere. He said that we all realize that economic impacts exist, but we should focus on the conditions and limits of the water resources and determine how to remain within the limits within each region.

Some discussion followed:

- It was clarified that there is a moratorium on new withdrawals from the Clayton Aquifer.
- With respect to aquifer storage and recovery, Masters can share some studies on this option. It was noted that there is also a private sector study for potential use of aquifer storage and recovery in the Middle Chattahoochee region. It is estimated that this system could provide for return streamflows of 100-300 cfs.
- A comment was made that ocean water is a potential option for future water supply (with desalination).
- In a dry period, agriculture uses an average of about 2.5 acre-inches of water per month during the height of the growing season.
- Agricultural operations can save 10-15% by upgrading from high-pressure to low-pressure irrigation systems. Many farmers have already made this improvement.
- Golladay and Hicks have a presentation that could help to provide more information on the effects of water use in this region.

Bingham requested that GB members come to the professional staff team members with ideas for educational presentations that would be helpful on topics of interest to ACFS.

Information Session: Institutional Options

Objective: *Learn about TUC, Institutional Options Study and National Science Foundation Proposal.*

Chad Taylor provided a brief report on The University Collaborative (TUC). The collaborative includes Auburn University, Florida State University, the University of Georgia, Albany State University, and the University of Florida. Taylor thanked the sub-committee of the Professional Services Committee that has been working on the development of TUC. A TUC meeting was held at the Jones Center in November.

Laurie Fowler from the University of Georgia reported that TUC has discussed several ways it can try to support ACFS, including: research on interstate institutional options, long-term scientific work to inform planning (for which TUC can partner with ACFS to attract research grant funding), and peer review. TUC submitted a pre-proposal to NSF to support research on December 1 and expect to hear if they will be invited to submit a full proposal in the spring. TUC will propose options to ACFS for peer review later this month. Chad Taylor referred to the NSF website for examples of similar projects to that proposed by TUC (<http://nsf.gov/>).

Fowler said that environmental law clinic students from the University of Georgia and the University of Florida are working on the institutional options research. Sam Fowler (Auburn) and Steve Leitman (Florida State University) will also support this work.

Next, two students, Chad Bickerton (UFL law school) and Shannon Bonney (UGA law school), reviewed the research to date on institutional options. Their slides are available on the ACFS website. They have identified a list of interstate and international water resource management institutions and a list of characteristics that they will be analyzing. After the initial literature review, they will be conducting phone interviews with representatives of the identified institutions. Most institutions on their list have a water supply and/or planning components, but most have a number of other functions as well. Fowler reported that after the interviews, TUC will provide a report that summarizes the findings on the institutions. They expect to ask the GB for feedback on that document in about six months. They expect to provide a menu of options for institutional arrangements to the ACFS as opposed to specific recommendations.

Summary of GB discussion:

- It was suggested that the report should identify the institutions' sources of revenue, revenue authority, and enabling authorities. The researchers noted that these characteristics will be included in their work.
- Comments indicated that the following functions should be added to the list to be evaluated: reservoir operations, agricultural water supply, and infrastructure development.
- It was noted that it would be helpful to understand what the initial purpose of the institutions were and whether they have changed over time.
- Several institutions to add to the list were suggested for inclusion.
- It was suggested that the legal system for water rights and management should be included in the analysis.

Chad Taylor clarified that a planned survey within the ACFS to understand perceptions about institutional arrangements has been put on hold for now. He noted that the March GB meeting is the next opportunity to interact with TUC representatives. Taylor also clarified that funding is now available to pursue with the navigation component of the proposed TUC research. Fowler will discuss wording of the proposed work description with Homer Hirt.

Committee and Work Group Status Reports

Objectives: *Learn about current committee and work group activities. Includes current financial report; fundraising activities; recommendations concerning implementation of the guidance in the Charter to ensure an open, fair and balanced process is being used consistently across the sub-basin caucuses; best practices survey report; and other committee activities.*

Advance materials: *Fundraising Report*

Finance Committee and Fundraising Committee

Billy Turner reported that the fundraising committee met yesterday. There are 20 more foundations to pursue. He asked GB members to identify any personal connections with foundations that might be helpful, and he reminded GB members of the importance of making personal contributions to ACFS.

Membership Committee

Jim Poff reported that a new membership recruitment plan will be a tool that GB members can use to help increase membership. It was suggested that recognition for sponsors be added to the recruitment plan. It was noted that the Education and Outreach Committee will be working with the Membership Committee to provide for a consistent education and outreach effort to support membership recruitment.

A member asked whether organizations can be members of ACFS. Mark Masters clarified that corporations and other organizations can be members of ACFS. The membership application asks if you are a formal representative of an organization. It is desirable for corporate and organizational members to identify a specific person that will be involved in ACFS on their behalf.

It was suggested that a category might be needed for sponsors, in addition to members. It was noted that the Georgia Association of Water Professionals has categories for individual members, corporate members, and sponsors.

ACFS previously decided not to have government members of the GB, at least initially. The attendance of state and federal agency staff at meetings has been very valuable, however. It was suggested that maybe ACFS might be ready to take the step to formally request the presence of state government representatives, perhaps as formal liaisons though not as GB members. ***James Emery made the following motion: The ACFS should make a formal request of the three states and the Corps to assign a non-voting liaison to attend ACFS GB meetings and other committees. Gordon Rogers seconded the motion.***

Summary of comments during discussion of the motion:

- We need to be clear that the government members are not a part of the consensus development.
- It seems that interaction with the agencies is working well now. It is important to ask them what they prefer and whether an invitation to serve as a formal liaison might be viewed as “requiring” their involvement?
- These representatives would be non-voting, but they would sit at the table and interact with the GB.
- It would be helpful to have government agency involvement to review and comment on the SWMP and IFLLA to ensure consistency.
- Representatives of the state agencies present were asked their views and said that an open invitation and encouragement for attendance at ACFS meetings would be better than asking for a formal commitment, which might put the state agencies in an awkward position.
- The request should also ask the government agencies to provide input and technical advice.
- It was recommended that several federal agencies be invited (e.g., NOAA, USFWS).
- An invitation to attend and participate is preferable to formal request.
- This is a good point in the process to invite the agencies to participate.

- We could ask for comments or review of the SWMP work products from some agencies. The scope of work would be a first opportunity for such review by state and federal agencies.
- The Intergovernmental Affairs Committee has identified agencies with which to share information and liaison. The important objective is to find a way to work together.
- The TOCWG might be a specific target for the invitation for participation.
- The invitation should come from the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

Emery made the following modifications to the motion: (1) make it an invitation to attend not a formal request for liaison, (2) include three federal agencies (Corps, USGS, USFWS) as well as the three states, and (3) identify the TOCWG as an important venue for their participation. Rogers seconded Emery's changes to the motion. Rogers offered a friendly amendment that additional federal agencies should be able to be invited as well (to be identified by the EC and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee).

Summary of comments during discussion of the modified motion:

- Concern was expressed that the motion should be reviewed by the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.
- GB members expressed their gratitude for attendance by the state agency representatives.
- However, it was also noted that the ACFS might not want to be held back by the input and concerns of the states, which have not been able to resolve the tri-state issue for decades.
- It was recommended that status quo arrangement would be fine, with the addition of asking the Corps to attend.
- A state representative said that the agency would try to participate in the TOCWG if requested.

Bingham asked if the group was ready to vote or if the issue required further discussion to clarify several variables, including whom to invite, in what capacity and to which meetings. In a straw poll, at least 12 GB members indicated that they were not ready to vote on the motion.

Chad Taylor moved to table the motion and refer further discussion of this motion to the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. Billy Mayes seconded the motion.

A member suggested that action on this issue could be expedited if the EC has the authority to act on the recommendation of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee before the next GB meeting. ***Chad Taylor amended his motion to authorize the EC to discuss and act on the recommendation of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee before the next GB meeting. Billy Mayes seconded the amendment. The motion was approved by consensus.***

Do Better Work Group

Kathy Nguyen referred to the Survey of Water Management Practices in the ACF Basin report from the Carl Vinson Institute. She advised the GB to review the report. She noted that the report was revised to include some areas of divergence of perspectives within the group. She indicated the need for responses from industry and agriculture representatives and encouraged the GB members to help collect these responses.

In response to a question, it was clarified that this report is not to be published for use outside of ACFS. In general, ACFS does not have an existing policy to address report publication. It was noted that the Education and Outreach Committee can make recommendations to the EC about publishing reports, and the EC has the authority to make decisions on publishing reports.

Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (IGA)

Wilton Rooks reported with appreciation that Betty Webb will be the new IGA Chair. The IGA Committee will be taking up the work started by George Martin and others for the IGA.

Education and Outreach Committee

Deron Davis reminded the GB that the charge to this committee is broad and addresses both internal and external communication. He reported that there has been success with recent media outreach meetings. He said that media reports can help to support ACFS fund-raising efforts. An AJC article is expected later this week. The committee is expanding media outreach into Florida and Alabama.

Davis said that the second electronic newsletter is available, and the third will come out early in the new year. He asked that GB members identify to him people that should receive these newsletters.

Davis said that the Committee is taking on two special projects based on this GB meeting: (1) internal communication encouraging membership donations, and (2) support to the Membership Committee on membership recruitment tools. He also said that GB members will start to receive e-news notifications when there are updates to the ACFS website.

It was noted that TOCWG will want to coordinate with the Education and Outreach Committee on getting information out from the SWMP and IFLLA process to the membership.

Wrap up and Next Steps

Objectives: Summarize decisions and next steps, with assignments. Identify possible topics for the February meeting, and discuss dates and location.

Masters reviewed the lists of accomplishments and next steps:

Accomplishments:

- Approved September 2011 meeting summary
- Held annual meeting, reviewed accomplishments in 2011 including significant fundraising success and progress on all elements of the Annual Plan
- Approved 2012 budget
- Authorized EC to contract with professional services team
- Ratified officers for 2012
- Learned about agricultural water use in the Flint
- Learned about plans for the SWMP and IFLLA
- Approved detailed charge for the Technical Oversight and Coordination Work Group
- Approved updates to Five Year Planning Program
- Approved 2012 Annual Plan
- Heard updates from the River Forecast Center, NIDIS and USGS WaterSMART Program
- Learned about The University Collaborative and plans for institutional options study and National Science Foundation proposal – signed letter agreement
- Heard updates from ACFS committees and work groups

Next Steps:

- IGA will bring recommendation to the EC on invitations for state and federal participants in GB and TOCWG meetings. EC has the authority to act prior to the next GB meeting.
- Additional meetings are being set up for the TOCWG (TOCWG and consultants).
- Make contributions to the ACFS in addition to dues (GB members).
- Begin using Google calendar for ACFS meetings (Masters).
- Develop an information packet for GB members (Masters).

Next, Masters reviewed the proposed GB meeting dates for 2012:

- March 15 &16: Apalachicola
- May 30 & 31: Columbus
- September 13 &14: Unicoi State Park
- December TBD: upper Flint

Chad Taylor encouraged that donations also be directed to the sub-basin caucus campaign for the TUC institutional options research.

Stripling said that dues must be paid prior to the next GB meeting in order to be a voting member at that meeting. Stripling thanked James Emery for raising an important issue and for everyone's efforts to listen in the discussion of that issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.