

The logo features a blue outline of the state of Georgia on the left, with a horizontal blue brushstroke extending to the right across the page. The text "Georgia's State Water Plan" is positioned to the right of the outline, with "Georgia's" in a smaller font and "State Water Plan" in a larger, bold font, all in blue.

Georgia's State Water Plan

Draft Water Resource Assessments

"If Georgia is to develop water resource plans that will allow continued sustainable use and enjoyment of the state's water resources, the state must first define the capabilities and current use of these water resources."

- Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan (2008) -

As described in the State Water Plan, resource assessments are evaluations of the capacity of water resources to meet demands for water supply and wastewater discharge without unreasonable impacts.

In January and February 2010, EPD conducted Joint Meetings of the Regional Water Planning Councils to: 1) deliver the preliminary results of the draft baseline resource assessments to the regional water planning councils; and, 2) provide representatives of each council with the first opportunity to exchange information with representatives of the other councils with whom they share water resources.

Preliminary Results of Draft Baseline Resource Assessments

- Groundwater availability
 - indicate that for all of the areas evaluated there is more groundwater available than is withdrawn to meet current demands
 - exceptions are seen in areas on the coast affected by saltwater intrusion and portions of the Lower Flint River basin (which are currently subject to special permitting provisions)
- Surface water availability
 - indicate that in much of the state there is sufficient water to meet current demands for offstream, consumptive water use and instream flow targets, even during dry periods
 - in some parts of the state, instream flow targets and current offstream needs cannot be fully met during dry periods
- Surface water quality
 - indicate that many of the water bodies evaluated are likely to be able to assimilate additional wastewater discharge (although downstream effects will have to be evaluated)
 - for some waterbodies, high levels of treatment may be required for additional wastewater discharges
 - non-point sources are a large source of nutrients and are likely causing higher values of chlorophyll-a in lakes

Technical Questions

If Councils identify the need for more detailed technical information on the resource assessment methodologies (i.e., what was done, how, and why those choices were made), EPD will provide the information as requested by each Council in a manner consistent with the 2010 project schedule.

Council Meetings

Each Council will conduct meetings in 2010 to: 1) evaluate how future water and wastewater demands can be met without unreasonable impacts; 2) select management practices; and, 3) draft an initial recommended regional water plan.

The preliminary results of the draft baseline resource assessments provide a starting point for each Council to consider how to meet the vision and goals for the region's water resources. Each Council will use the draft resource assessments along with the draft water demand forecasts to select the management practices that will be used in the region.

To evaluate how future water and wastewater demands can be met without unreasonable impacts, EPD will run the resource assessment models with the water demand forecasts and specific inputs on management practices from each Council. For example, a Council may determine the anticipated locations of additional groundwater withdrawals and the volume of groundwater desired for a location.

Each Council will coordinate the selection of management practices with other councils and evaluate the fiscal impacts and impacts on shared water resources of the management practices with input from local government representatives.

Submission of Comments

In the first quarter of 2010, EPD will release a synopsis of each draft water resource assessment for public comment via www.georgiawaterplanning.org and the ten regional websites. The public comment period will be open for at least sixty days from the time of posting. During that time, the detailed technical report associated with each draft water resource assessment will also be released. EPD will consider all comments, provide responses and make necessary revisions to the draft water resource assessments.

Refinements and adjustments to the draft water resource assessments are expected and will be based on input from Council members, interested groups, the general public and the scientific and engineering advisory panel.

Councils will use preliminary drafts of the baseline water resource assessments to begin the initial selection of management practices.