

## January 25, 2011 STF WATER Work Group Summary

The Water Recommendation Work Group met a fourth time on Jan 25, 2011. Sustainability task force members were asked to volunteer for the water management recommendations workgroup.

Attendees

**Task Force members:**

Wynne Coleman

Sherry Johnson

Karen Ringe

Sara Robertson

Amanda Vuke (for M. Sanera)

Suzanne Harris

**Guests:**

Mary Brice - Dewberry

**Staff:**

**WECO:**

Patrick Beggs

Kat Williams

**Wake County:**

Tommy Esqueda

**Meeting Objective:** Provide feedback on each of the draft strategies to guide revisions that will go to full Sustainability Task Force

**Please see previous meeting summaries on the website:** [www.ncsu.edu/weco/wake](http://www.ncsu.edu/weco/wake)

The group needed to review strategies K, L, M, N, O

The group briefly talked about K and then got back to it later.

K. Reduce the volume of stormwater runoff
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This was unfinished last time. Can we tie this to local watershed planning, which was a part of B.

We need to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff.

How much is being reduced: wanted to have measurable benchmarks, want to tie into Swift and Neuse regulations. Doing it this way would bring local watershed planning into the picture.

Reduced stormwater runoff = reduced flooding

Having had some discussion on K at Jan 6 meeting, Patrick asked the group to move to L and get back to K. Patrick agreed to be reminded about getting back to K, 30 minutes before the end of the meeting.

L. Restore streams, wetlands, and buffers
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Should this be a recommendation? Wording doesn't capture the idea of protecting or restoring buffers.

All of this could be under Local Watershed Planning. Do we know where the streams are in need of restoration? Local watershed planning involves: assessment and then planning for protection, perseveration of what is working, and restoring what needs it.

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Add preserve, protect and restore streams wetland and buffers.

Does this go under Local Watershed Planning?

We need municipal buy in. Municipalities might be more willing to adopt Local Watershed Planning language.

We need something well researched and adoptable by cities.

In the open space plan, Wake leads by getting local cities to do their own plan to receive funds. Can we do the same for watershed planning?

Local watershed planning can help governments to have a standard for assessment and management.

The water quality is an ill defined issue. Where do we get into trouble with the plan? When the state sees failing streams, streams that don't meet their intended uses, they step in. This creates windows for third party law suits. We can't talk about abstract water quality. Our water bodies should be meeting the state's "designated uses."

Connecting to state designated uses can open up funding for local governments and others to restore streams.

I am frustrated we are not moving along.

I understand your frustration, but this involvement would not show success if the outcome is not adopted by the county, so we need to make sure it is.

Getting back to the recommendation - Wake should take the lead -- shop it around.

Clarification, the word Local in local watershed planning refers to small watersheds, as compared to local governments.

We shouldn't be top down for cities but we need the language "protect, preserve and restore."

We should use "designated uses, measurable benchmarks, preserve, protect, restore"

M. Integrate planning between water resources and land conservation
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We need intent. Why do this?

Designated intent should be to protect, preserve and restore using State designated usages as standards.

This would fit underneath Local Watershed Planning. Another goal of LWP could be to integration -- to fit this into watershed and land conservation.

Isn't open space decided by water already? Yes. This is something the county is already doing in some areas, but needs to address issues the county is "not so hot" at dealing with. If the county is already doing this, then continue, otherwise, start it.

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New development should integrate this info. Make it simpler to approve permits if there is a plan and is it being supported. Let's make the accepted way of fast tracking developments be the way which involves water sensitivity objectives.

Conservation developments should be permitted more easily.

Conservation design needs to be protecting water quality -- not just an open space ratio -- has to be accomplishing water protection on the site. Just because someone saves some open space - that area might not even be able to be built on - why should we give those developers that benefit?

Integrate water resources planning with land conservation. This is a part of local watershed planning, if you integrate land conservation within watershed planning.

### N. Establish a regional water entity with all communities and user groups represented

Raleigh controls water for 6 other municipalities, no entity is planning for county wide, we are not looking at the bigger picture together. If there was a larger authority then our planning would allow more inclusiveness of smaller towns.

The history of this is that the distribution of control was completely for economic reasons.

I struggle with the word 'regional' - East Wake West Wake are already regional, aren't they?

Collaboration does happen - during crisis -- a lot of this is going on. There is a lot of collaboration.

There is a trend toward regionalism at all levels of water management. Everyone served by the utilities.

Isn't everyone represented? Merged towns have some legal representation. Un-incorporated do not have a voice.

A majority was rationing back water allocation.

The county does not have a role in a regional water system.

That is a generalized statement.

Wake should encourage and participate in regional approaches to water.

We do have a dog in this fight! The tax base is shrinking or could slip away. The county could lose protections, control, and of course the tax base on annexations.

The county is looking at direct service providers and is as supportive as possible and encouraging to get enough water where it's needed.

What about groundwater? It goes back to representation. Is the county on this groundwater problems issue?

### O. Examine water resource allocation

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State's role is in tracking and modeling now. Water rights are not well defined. Water reallocation is often discussed. Updates in water and sewer plans are needed. Municipalities do have to update.

This needs to be done on a grander scale- on a state wide scale. Do we need to expand to include groundwater allocation? Does groundwater allocation need its own letter? (Patrick: I think previous meeting comments have suggested groundwater will get its own recommendation, but I need to check the notes, and that doesn't mean it can't go here also, or instead.)

Isn't there some analysis on the aquifer? There is rainfall, usage linkage work being done in Wake now.

We need data to tackle the ground water issue. If there was a reliable way to determine groundwater availability, I would support this, but is there a method?

There has to be some accountability

No state agency has authority to regulate pumping rate of well, except within certain areas called Capacity Use Areas and for certain, very large pumpers. Wake is asking for authority in the next legislative session. Wake is working now to get well connectivity understood.

Water rights are sketchy and ill defined here in NC.

Add to the recommendation, under groundwater. "We encourage the county to engage in allocation."

Swap the words water 'allocation' for water supply 'availability.'

No, allocation needs to be addressed. When we hit the limit of availability then what?

Wake should encourage everyone to active participation in water allocation and water supply availability discussions.

Wake needs to update its water and sewer plans.

**Recommendation P, about education, was covered in an earlier meeting, so we are going back to K.**

K. Reduce the volume of stormwater runoff
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What about reduce or mitigate the impacts of storm water runoff - to evaluate and reduce the impacts.

It's important to isolate issue: it's the impacts that need to be identified, not the actual runoff.

Implement the Jordan and falls Lake Rules

Update stormwater ordinances.

Needs to say reduce the volume and rate, and take other measures to lessen impacts.

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One important strategy is controlling storm water runoff. One of the goals in reducing storm water runoff is developmental -- it is about protecting downstream property.

If this is strategy -- where are the biggest problems? We need to look at impact points.

Where is the biggest bang for the buck? is it in retrofits?

This isn't all about new development. Even if we change everything about new development, there will still be problems because there are problems now.

What about changing it to say "existing and new development" and adding language to describe impacts.