

**Recommendations for Enhancing Inter-Council Planning:** Each council shall develop a recommendation to EPD of whether and how they would like to engage with other Councils during the Review and Revision process. The recommendation should identify the Council(s) and topic(s) for further coordination, and the recommended steps and time frames for conducting that coordination.

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The Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council trusts there are myriad benefits to crossing regional boundaries to engage with adjacent Councils in understanding how water quality and quantity issues impact the various regions. Blessed with plentiful water resources in the Altamaha region, the Council believes that one Council should not drive what another does but should collaborate and cooperate, work to build trust amongst members, and identify ways to develop information beneficial to all.

Understanding how regions impact each other is important to the overall quality of the regional water plans, and given that, there are six regions that the Altamaha may seek to engage to enhance inter-council planning: the Coastal and Suwannee - Satilla (who are impacted by the Altamaha); the Upper Oconee and Upper Ocmulgee (who impact the Altamaha); the Upper Flint, and the Savannah - Upper Ogeechee. Some general questions that can be addressed to the relevant upstream Councils and/or downstream Councils include:

- Are there specific issues, concerns, or developments upstream that will impact flows?
- Are there concerns about water quality and quantity from upstream and downstream regions?
- Are there any big plans (reservoirs or other potentially big impacts) upstream or downstream?
- What are the major issues/concerns in adjacent regions?
- Where are the gaps in adjacent regions and how can that impact the Altamaha Region or how is the Altamaha Region impacting adjacent region gaps?
- What do other Councils consider the biggest issues or concerns created by the Altamaha?

Several mechanisms for sharing information were also discussed:

- Stakeholder or subcommittee groups could jointly meet to discuss cross-region issues (surface water; groundwater; saltwater intrusion; water quality);
- Council members could review adjacent Council plans and identify concerns to take to them;
- Representatives from adjacent Councils could be invited to attend Altamaha Council meetings;
- Educational opportunities could be created by EPD for Council members to learn from one another, to build relationships, and to understand shared issues and concerns;
- Council members could be assigned to attend other Council meetings; or
- Topic-based information sessions could be established to jointly educate Councils.

The Council discussed several specific things that they would like to learn from the Lower Flint Council: how will the impact of permits not being issued effect adjacent regions; a better understanding of the interaction between surface and subsurface flows; and what similarities exist between the regions and therefore could serve as cautionary tales for the Altamaha Region.

These exchanges of information and educational opportunities between and among Councils should begin early in the review and revision process to better inform the Councils and should continue throughout the project cycle. **In addition, the Altamaha Council recommends that EPD host a yearly conference of all water councils to share information on activities and issues of concern.**