



Collaborative Watershed Management in Georgia

Successes and Challenges from the First Effort
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- * Who knew?
- It all started with 5 unused SONDEs and a firestarter (Jerry Jones, USACE).
- Grew to 10 local sponsors, plus EPA, GA EPD, FWS, USGS, TNC, and others.

GA: Laggards or Pathbreakers?

- Answer: Yes.
- GA is a late adopter of Collaborative Decision Making and Environmental Conflict Resolution
- This effort = first effort to assess and manage water on the watershed level, not the jurisdictional level (e.g. counties, cities, water authorities, etc.)
- Collaboration and Management at Watershed level was NOT mandated by any governmental authorities. Voluntary effort. Why?

Tangible Benefits of Participation

- For USACE: Congressional Mandate to clean up Lake Allatoona, but no jurisdiction over the rivers flowing into the lake.
- For Local Sponsors:
- Satisfy the requirement for a unilateral watershed assessment and protection implementation plan by the sponsors when new or expanded NPDES permits are needed. Cheaper & environmentally superior to monitor at the watershed level.
- The data collected can serve as the basis for better informed land-use/zoning decisions by local governments that allow development while protecting our water resources.

Tangible Benefits of Participation

- The data collected can serve to confirm or challenge assumptions that GA EPD uses to determine waste assimilation capacities, water withdrawal capacities, water resource impairment levels (e.g. 303D listing), and health and population levels of aquatic organisms (fish and insects).
- Data collected in this study will be helpful in compliance with monitoring requirements under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) regulations.
- Data collected in this study can be used to evaluate the efficacy of local compliance with Erosion and Sedimentation Control regulations.

Tangible Benefits

- This study will yield data that will be used to enhance protection and operations of the Lake Allatoona Reservoir to protect and improve the health and uses of this water resource. Protection of the source waters flowing into Lake Allatoona is paramount in the effort to improve and protect the health of this reservoir.
- NO NATURAL LAKES IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA.
- ATLANTA IS LOCATED ON A SUBCONTINENTAL DIVIDE.
- (lots of rain but no water...)

INtangible Benefits of Participation

- This project may serve as a model for watershed work under the Georgia Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan that EPD is currently developing. Inform upstream policymaking.
- Demonstrate proactive voluntary action—Improve position with regulatory agencies and environmental advocacy groups.
- Be the first effort of its kind in GA.

Timeline

- November/December 2003
- First group of stakeholders met to decide where the 5 free water monitoring SONDEs will go.

Questions Raised:

Should placement be politically based? Ecologically based? Pragmatically based? Who pays for their upkeep? Who collects and processes the data (quite labor intensive)? Who maintains the SONDEs (\$\$\$).

Tasks: Build trust, plan a process.

Timeline: Key Turning Points

- Mission grew to the creation of a Watershed-wide modeling and assessment effort.
- Memorandum of Understanding Signed with GA EPD: Summer 2005
- 2005 Financial Cost Share Agreement Signed with USACE and 10 Sponsors (50/50 Cost share with USACE; about \$5 million total project costs).

Challenges/Failures

- 2008 USACE loses funding for project ☹
- Firestarter left USACE and then...full circle.
- 2010 Two of the most rural counties decided not to fully commit themselves to the same level of protection as the others.
- 2010 EPD so underfunded, fairly unresponsive. "Rubber-toothed dog"
- Unanswered Questions: How to implement protection projects across 10 jurisdictions?
- Who pays? Prioritization of projects? What if 1 player defaults? What will the enforcement mechanism be?

Successes

- Completed Deliverables:
- Watershed Assessment 2009
- Watershed Protection Plan 2010
- More high-quality data on this watershed than any other watershed in Georgia.
- This data may allow a "cap and trade" pilot for phosphorus (non-point source to non-point source).
- Cost savings for sponsors in 100k+
- Developed new modeling tools.

TABLE 1 The Perceived Environmental Impact of the LAUE Collaboration

Question	Sponsors in Agreement	Sponsors Unsure	Non-Sponsors in Agreement	Non-Sponsors Unsure
The Environmental Impact of this Project will be better than if we had Not Worked Collaboratively	50%	18.8	100%	0%
Knowledge of the Water Resource Has Improved	100%	0%	83.3%	16.7%
The Monitoring Plan was superior to what Individual Sponsors Could have Accomplished	62.6%	12.6%	67%	33%

The Watershed Assessment was Superior to what Individual Sponsors Could have Accomplished	62.6%	25.1%	50%	50%
This Process will Lead to More Informed Public Decisions or Actions	81.3%	6.3%	66.7%	16.5%
The Customers I Serve will Benefit from this Project	56.3%	31.3%	83.3%	0%

TABLE 2: Impact of the Collaboration on Relationships

Question	Sponsors in Agreement	Sponsors Unsure	Non-Sponsors in Agreement	Non-Sponsors Unsure
The Networks and Relationships Built Here will Come in Handy for Future Efforts	93.8%	6.3%	100%	0%
My Ability to Work Cooperatively With the [other] Sponsors has Increased	75.1%	12.5%	66.7%	33.3%
I anticipate Smoother Relationships with Regulators/Sponsors as a Result of My Organization's Participation	68.8%	12.5%	66.7%	33.4%
The Process Helped Explore Options and Meet Participant's Needs	58.8%	37.5%	83.3%	16.7%

- ### Unexpected Benefits
- Enhanced technical skills for sponsors
 - Collaboration led to more collaboration: Joint grant writing, shared technical skills, etc.
 - A deeper understanding of the resources and its threats. Better science.
 - Trust and networking that had positive spill-over impacts in many ways.

- ### Lessons & Challenges for Facilitators
- Needs & Strategies for long-term interventions are different.
 - Roles: PR rep & spokesperson; Lobbyist; Grant writer; Translator; Dumbest person in the room; elephant spotter; Cat herder; Convenor; Mediator; Listener; Political Scientist.
 - Keeping the focus on interests. Framing skills.
 - Avoiding the "we"? Identity and neutrality issues.
 - Build relationships; Establish traditions; Invest in skill building for parties.

Lessons & Challenges for Facilitator

- Over-reliance on the neutral?
- Projects grow in unimaginable ways. Ebb and flow. Smooth and rough patches.
- Roll with the punches. Ups and downs; Changes in contracting.
- Always wishing I could do more...constrained by budget and comfort level of the parties.
- Being the only woman in the room. Diversity issues.

Generalizable Lessons

- Ability of ECR efforts to indirectly shape policy, rules, relationships between regulators and the regulated, impact the way work gets done.
- Sometimes voluntary collaboration IS the only way. This is under-documented in the literature.

Resources from the Literature

- Dukes, F.E. "What we know about environmental conflict resolution: An analysis based on Research" *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Volume 22, Issue 1, Date: Autumn (Fall) - Winter 2004, Pages: 191-220.
- Anderson L.L. Jr. and B Polkinghorne. "Managing conflict in construction megaprojects: Leadership and third-party principles" *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 2008, 26(2), 167-198.
- D'Estree, T.P. "Achievement of Relationship Change." In R. O'Leary and L.B. Bingham (eds), *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution* Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 2003

Resources from the Literature

- Emerson, K., P.J. Orr, D.L. Keyes, K.M. McKnight, "Environmental conflict resolution: Evaluating performance outcomes and contributing factors" *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Volume 27, Issue 1, Date: Autumn (Fall) 2009, Pages: 27-64.

Publishing in ECR

- Any interest?
- Why?
- Share lessons learned, improve theory and practice of ECR, build your reputation.
- How?
- Articles (ACResolution, newsletters, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* and others etc.)
- Books