

Tennessee Water Resource Planning Pilots

The Department of Environment and Conservation has initiated water resources planning pilots to develop model regional water plans for the southern Cumberland Plateau consisting of portions of Franklin, Grundy, Marion, and Sequatchie Counties and the towns of Tracy City, Sewanee, Altamont, and Monteagle and in North Central Tennessee, focusing primarily on Sumner County.

The benefits of a regional water plan have been discussed and recommended by the department's Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (<http://www.tn.gov/environment/boards/wrtac/>). The Committee and the Department have worked with the Corps of Engineers (Nashville District) to compile Phase I, which primarily is baseline data. (The Corps worked with the utility districts to gather that baseline information for the pilot.)

The regional pilot areas were chosen from those areas that experienced stress from the 2007 – 2008 drought. The pilots have multi-agency participation and multi-utility district focus. Regional planning allows for a collective of systems to be able to address a water source need that individually they would not have the capacity to address.

The objectives / goals of the pilots are to provide:

- Recommended alternative(s) to address the water supply needs for the pilot area
- Suggestions regarding the financing of the recommended alternative and the business or management structure to support it
- Recommended actions the community, municipalities and utilities can undertake to reduce water demands (conservation, efficiency, smart growth, low impact development)
- Identify who will “own” the plan and pursue its implementation
- Model for statewide water resources regional planning

Key elements of the pilot include:

- Community outreach (ensuring community input and participation)
- Baseline info on the pilot area
- Identification of current water use and the capabilities of the water systems
- Understanding the land-use in the pilot areas and any official plans
- Determining the need (comparing availability to projections)
- Looking at the economics
- Evaluating alternatives (including financing options and potential business management scenarios)

Status of the Process

- Baseline information (gathered by the Corps working with the UD's) has been finalized into a report that is available on the regional planning website (include site address in meeting handout).
- Have held two meetings with UD management and some of the elected officials to introduce them to the pilot, get their feed back on some of the baseline information gathered and begin to gather their input on alternatives to be considered.
- Public meetings are scheduled for September and October for the two areas.
- Multi-agency team working on specific assignments in the elements of the pilot (individually and in subgroups)
- Goal is to evaluate alternatives by late 2009 early 2010 and have a preferred alternative by spring 2010

TDEC is excited about the possibilities this pilot study offers for the future of this region and the state. If you have any immediate questions about the pilot , please contact Elaine Boyd, TDEC Strategic Management Director, at Elaine.Boyd@tn.gov or 615-532-0288.