

Path Forward Committee (PFC) Check-in Meeting AgendaJuly 11, 2023, **9:30 AM to 11:00 AM**

Remote Access by Teams (connection details below)

Note this meeting is a check-in to summarize developments since the Board meeting on June 21st and should not last more than an hour and a half.

Any additional materials related to this Check-in PFC Meeting will be placed on the UNRBA website: [UNRBA Meetings Page](#).

- I. **Opening Comments, Agenda Review/Revisions — Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett**

- II. **FOCUS FOR TODAY'S CHECK-IN: General discussion of the status of the review of the Concepts and Principles Document, a review of the UNRBA/DWR meeting of June 22nd, and a brief review of ongoing discussions with the UNRBA's legal advisor.**
Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Since November 2022, the PFC has been discussing concepts and principles under consideration for inclusion in the UNRBA's recommendations for a revised Falls Lake Strategy/Revised Falls Lake Rules. These discussions were used to develop a preliminary draft document that describes the concepts and principles. This document has been revised based on PFC and stakeholder input and was provided to the Board ahead of their June meeting for general consideration. Following that meeting, the updated draft of the Concepts and Principles Document (C&P Document) was sent out to the PFC general email list for review and comment. Comments are due by July 14th. We encourage input on this document. Only the general direction of the C&P Document will be discussed today and the schedule for securing a final document as reviewed at the September PFC and approved at the September 20th Board meeting. We will review comments received at the August PFC meeting ahead of producing an updated draft for review in August. A public-facing summary has been drafted and is under review but should be available soon. On June 22nd, the Executive Director team and the Co-Chairs of the PFC met with DWR. This meeting included the Division Director and management and key staff of the Planning Section. The meeting provided good progress on laying out a pathway for cooperation and collaboration on re-adoption of the Falls Lake Rules and established some key priorities and objectives related to the chlorophyll-a standard. We described this objective as a "partnership" to achieving an updated strategy. Following the DWR/UNRBA meeting, an email summarizing the results of this meeting was sent to DWR and has been provided to the PFC for this check-in. Outcomes of that meeting and future steps will be discussed. The UNRBA extended its engagement with its legal advisor, Fred Andes with Barnes & Thornburg, at the June Board meeting. The materials noted today have been provided to this consulting attorney and we discussed these developments at a Zoom meeting on July 5th.

- III. **Modeling and Regulatory Support Status**
Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The Technical Stakeholders Workshop is scheduled to follow a shortened August 1st PFC meeting (9:00 to 10:00 AM), 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM. This session will provide a detailed review of modeling results as well as key technical and policy considerations. The Watershed Analysis Risk Management Framework (WARMF) has been revised to address comments from the MRSW and DWR and to include the results of watershed scenarios. The Executive Director and Chair of the Modeling and

Regulatory Support Workgroup (MRSW) are reviewing the revisions and responses to comments. The draft will be refined in response to their comments and provided back to the MRSW (redline and clean copy) and to the PFC (clean copy only) for review. A final report will be submitted to DWR following the review process. In response to requests from DWR at the WARMF Model training, the model interface was refined to provide additional functionality similar to the old interface. A final set of WARMF model files has been provided to DWR for review. The EFDC model training is scheduled for August 2nd, at Butner Town Hall.

The third lake model is the Statistical/Bayesian/Decision Support model which is based on an extensive data base dating back to the 1990s. Evaluations of loading to Falls Lake are being compiled including tributary loading, atmospheric deposition, and nutrient releases from Falls Lake sediments. The subject matter experts and third-party reviewers funded by the NC Collaboratory began reviewing the input data and categorization in February. Evaluations of data within the lake arms compared to the main lake is being conducted to inform model development.

The lake modeling report (WARMF Lake, EFDC, and the UNRBA Statistical/Bayesian model) is under development. This report will include the results of the lake sensitivity and scenario evaluations.

Other Items (some summarized above). Additional narrative only provided for background, your reference and consideration:

IV. Gathering Data from Local Governments to Support the Cost Benefit Analysis

Item Summary (Alix Matos): An important component of the re-examination is understanding the costs of past and possible future actions in the watershed as well as the benefits in terms of nutrient load reductions and improvements in lake water quality. To support this cost-benefit analysis, we are requesting information from the PFC as described during the [February PFC meeting](#). Please email initial information to amatos@brwnaald.com and ashley@brindlecreek.com and copy Forrest.Westall@mcgillassociates.com. Structured data requests will follow after existing data and reports have been reviewed and compiled.

V. Timeline for the Development of Recommendations for a Revised Strategy and Model Development Documentation

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The timeline for the development of strategy revision recommendations was set in 2018 as part of the modified legislation that created the Collaboratory. The December of 2023 goal for providing the UNRBA recommendations has been ahead of us since that legislation was passed. We are well on our way to having the C&P document finalized and have a draft of Consensus Principles II in preparation. These two documents will be the primary communication to the state (EMC, DEQ, DWR and General Assembly) on how the jurisdictions in this watershed view the key components of a revised strategy. The final C&P document will be the support for the new set of consensus principles. We also, as noted, are working to have our model documentation reporting completed soon. Compliance with the UNRBA's approved Quality Assurance Project Plan is the main yardstick for confirming that this work was completed in accordance with established model development guidelines. The Executive Director has

discussed with the two Co-Chairs of the PFC the plan for this process and the schedule for completing this work. We need to keep in clear focus meeting this schedule because it is critical to placing before the state our recommendations for a revised strategy and our recommendations for the need of a site-specific water quality standard for chlorophyll-a in Falls Lake.

VI. **Communications Support**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Several outreach efforts remain underway, including ongoing engagement with DWR and finalizing the C&P Document for review by a broad group of stakeholders. Following discussion with communications staff at the City of Durham, the communications team is developing a high-level, public-facing document (noted above) to describe the challenges for the Falls Lake watershed and the concepts and principles under consideration by the UNRBA to maintain and improve water quality in Falls Lake. When finalized, this electronic document can be distributed by the local governments and utilities to their contact lists and social media accounts to provide information about the effort and how the general public and other organizations can be involved in review of the draft documents in preparation for submittal in December 2023.

The Executive Director will continue scheduling presentations at the local government's Board, Council, and other local meetings, as invited, to discuss the recommendations for a revised nutrient management strategy over the next several months. He is scheduled to present to the Creedmoor City Commission on July 17th, to the Wake County Growth & Sustainability Committee on September 18, 2023 and to the Durham County Board of County Commissioners Work Session on October 2, 2023. The Executive Director continues to reach out to PFC and Board members from our member governments to identify presentation opportunities.

A regulatory forum is generally being considered for spring 2024 to discuss the next steps in the rules readoption process. We have requested that DWR be involved in this forum and to present initial responses from DWR on the recommendations. Following submittal of the UNRBA recommendations and the Falls Lake NC Collaboratory report in December 2023, we anticipate that DWR will begin to formulate a plan for readoption of the rules. We hope to engage with DWR on that process and, as already mentioned to DWR, work cooperatively with them as the new rules are drafted.

As we still understand, American Rivers is still planning a "Neuse River of the Year" event for the upper part of the basin. The UNRBA is planning a press release to coincide with the timing of the event. This press release will also reference the successes of the IAIA. Plans to develop videos and messaging for UNRBA members to distribute on their social media accounts would coincide with this event to streamline videography products to be used to promote the work of the UNRBA.

The "open" nature of all UNRBA meetings remains a key component of a transparent communications approach. We encourage member representatives and interest individuals to speak up about ideas and opportunities to communicate our work and the importance of a revised strategy and a site-specific standard.

VII. **Other Status Items**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Brief statements on ongoing activities:

- **PLEASE NOTE: Year 2 of the IAIA ended June 30th, and annual reports to DWR are due September 30th with a copy to UNRBA. Member representatives should keep in mind that the Consensus**

Principles II will need to be approved by their jurisdictional boards and commissions in October to allow the UNRBA to provide completed recommendations with the full support of the UNRBA jurisdictions.

- Intensive work and coming deadlines make it important to manage expectations and resources— Recommendations are due at the end of 2023.
- Ongoing DEQ/DWR Items—DWR Neuse Watershed Model; delivery factors for WWTP—work is underway
- The UNRBA provided comments on DWR 20-yr status report for the Neuse and Tar-Pam Estuaries

VIII. Closing Comments— Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett

Next PFC Meeting: August 1, 2023, 9:00 AM

Technical Stakeholder’s Workshop, August 1, 2023, 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Next BOD Meeting: September 20, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon

This schedule may be revised, and notices will be provided about any change.

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