

ALABAMA WATER AGENCIES WORKING GROUP:

OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

NICK TEW, AWAWG CHAIRMAN
STATE GEOLOGIST OF ALABAMA



AWAWG STAKEHOLDER MEETING
APRIL 5, 2016
AUBURN, AL

WHAT IS THE AWAWG?

Phase 1--A group of five state agencies with significant roles in water resources evaluation, management, and regulation tasked by Governor Bentley to meet and propose a state water management action plan.



Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Alabama Department of Environmental Management



Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries



Alabama Office of Water Resources



Geological Survey of Alabama



AWAWG PHASE 1 CHARGE FROM GOV. BENTLEY, APRIL 2012

- Create a comprehensive database of Alabama's water resources.
- Meet with stakeholders.
- Recommend a statewide water management action plan and timetable by December 1, 2013.



VISION STATEMENT

- All individuals and agricultural, commercial, and industrial activities will have needed water for beneficial purposes
- Protect the natural living resources of the State or future quality of life in Alabama.
- General welfare and sustained economic development dependent upon the beneficial use of our water resources to their fullest extent.



AWAWG PRINCIPLES

- There is a fundamental need to provide significant additional State funding for data collection, water assessments, including statewide water management planning and education.
- There needs to be a comprehensive education and outreach process to ensure that Alabama citizens have a better understanding of the importance of water resources management for the State.
- Water should be managed in consideration of hydrologic boundaries while recognizing existing political boundaries and legal entities.
- Water management policies should be based on sound science.
- Drought planning should be proactive and reflect local input and involvement on how any necessary water restrictions will be determined and imposed.

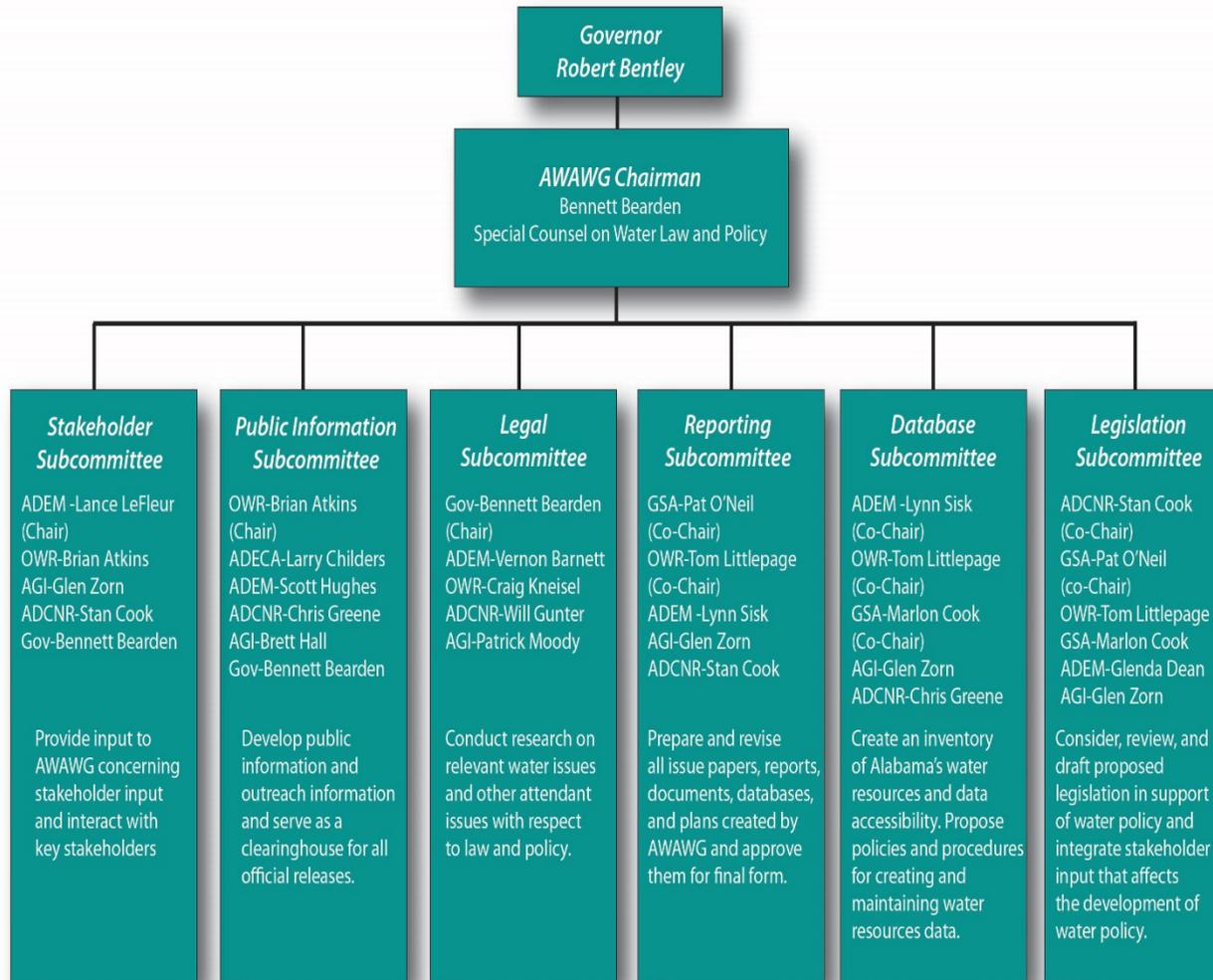


PRINCIPLES

- Management of surface and groundwater quantity and quality should be closely coordinated.
- Water management decisions should be delegated to the lowest levels of government with appropriate State guidance on issues such as instream flow levels, interbasin transfer policies, regional infrastructure development incentives, etc.
- Alabama should be sensitive to involvement of entities external to state jurisdiction in water policy and take proactive measures to ensure State sovereignty in the management decisions affecting its water resources.
- The process of water resources planning involves dynamic factors and any policies and plans should have a periodic review component.



STRUCTURE OF AWAWG



AWAWG PHASE 1 ACTIONS

- ◆ Evaluated and analyzed Alabama's water issues and management strategies: *Water Management Issues in Alabama* (WMIA).
- ◆ Compiled water resource data sources and identified additional data needs.
- ◆ Reviewed the 1990 report, *Water for a Quality of Life*, and evaluated its implementation status.
- ◆ Solicited and evaluated stakeholder comments to the WMIA report.
- ◆ Recommended a process and action plan, the Alabama MAP Process, for moving water policy forward.



**MAPPING THE FUTURE OF
ALABAMA WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT:
Policy Options and Recommendations**



A Report to
The Honorable Robert Bentley
Governor of Alabama
by the
Alabama Water Agencies Working Group
December 1, 2013



TWELVE ISSUE AREAS IDENTIFIED

- Surface and Groundwater Availability
- Water Resources Management
- Water Resources Data
- Instream Flow
- Water Conservation and Reuse
- Economic Development
- Education and Outreach
- Interbasin Transfers
- Riparian and Other Legal Issues
- Drought Planning
- Certificates of Use/Permitting
- Interstate Coordination



ANALYSIS OF 1990 STUDY WATER FOR A QUALITY OF LIFE

Of 105 recommendations:

Fully implemented--27%

Partially implemented--46%

Not implemented--27%



STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

- September 2012 through December 2013, comment period.
- Eighty-two stakeholders and stakeholder groups responded.

Stakeholder Group	Number	Percent
Citizen	10	12
Water Utility	4	5
Federal Agency	9	11
State Agency	8	10
Academic	6	7
Business-Industry	12	15
Environmental	18	22
Water Utility Associations	5	6
Watershed-Recreation	2	2
Lake HOBO	8	10



STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

- 52 % - Water resources management
- 42 % - Water resources data collection
- 40 % - Surface and groundwater assessments
- 40 % - Instream flow
- 39 % - Water conservation and reuse
- 35 % - Economic development
- 34 % - Stakeholder education and outreach
- 28 % - Interbasin transfers
- 26 % - Public education and outreach
- 26 % - Riparian and other legal issues
- 20 % - Drought planning
- 17 % - Enhanced Certificates of Use (COU)/permitting
- 16 % - Interstate coordination



STAKEHOLDER COMMONALITIES

- Water resource assessments, data collection systems, and database accessibility need to be improved and expanded.
- Process must be transparent with broad collaborative support and participation by water users, stakeholders and agencies.
- Economic concerns were important with a noted desires to not burden the economy.
- There needs to be a commitment to funding at a level commensurate with the task of developing water policies and plans.



STAKEHOLDER DIVERGENCES

- The most strongly divergent views were on water withdrawal permitting. The efficacy of current riparian common law-based water management versus management flexibility and resource predictability of a regulated riparian system.
- The importance of maintaining ecologically relevant instream flows with the caveat that any instream flow criteria should be clearly defined within an overall management mechanism.
- The need to manage interbasin transfers (IBTs) was highlighted by some groups because of their fundamental role in water supply while others challenged using IBTs as a first strategy, relying on efficiency, conservation, and water reuse to offset future needs.



ACTION PLAN

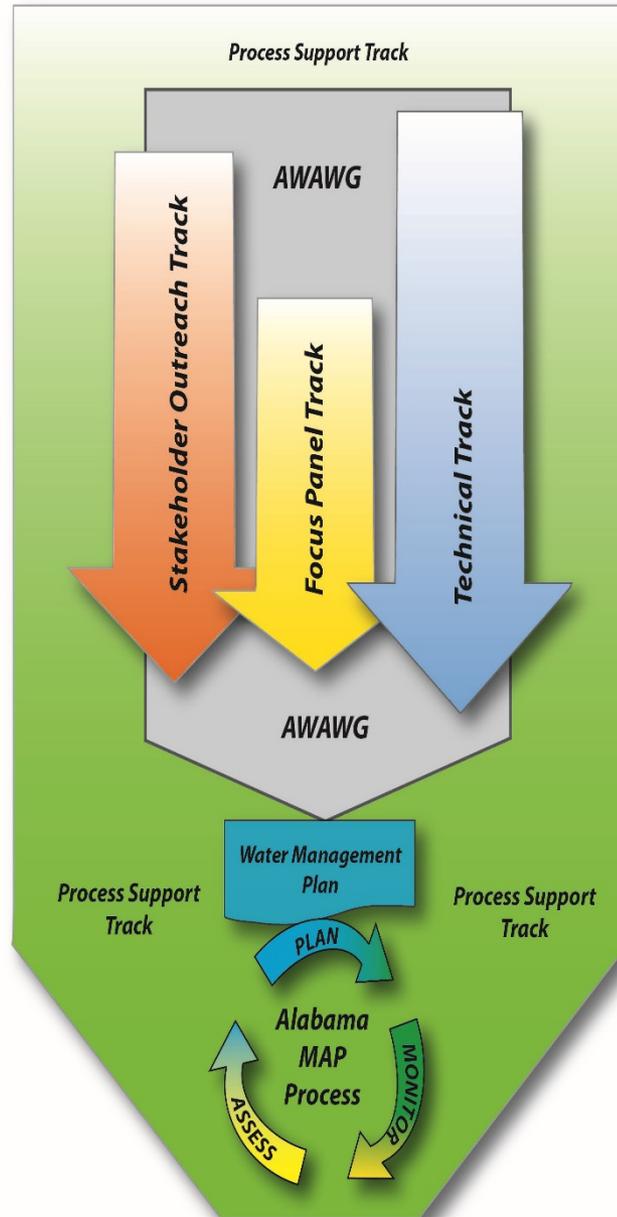
<u>Issue Area Policy Options and Recommendations</u>	<u>Involvement</u> Governor Legislature Agencies Stakeholders	<u>Est. Cost</u> Low ≤1M Medium \$1-3M High >\$3M	<u>Start Priority</u> Low Moderate High	<u>Est. Comp Schedule</u> Short ≤1 Yr Mid 1-5Yr Long >5 Yr	<u>Comments</u>
Surface water and Groundwater Availability Assessments					
Continue funding for on-going assessments and monitoring efforts.	Governor Legislature Agencies	Medium	High	Mid	MAP Component - Assess
Provide funding and support to enhance on-going scientific assessments and data collection efforts. This should also include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State funding to match federal dollars for the USGS monitoring network. The federal water agencies should be strongly encouraged by the Governor to adequately support this program with federal funding to leverage available state resources. ○ Expansion and support of the statewide, real time groundwater level monitoring network currently being implemented by the GSA. ○ Ensure that the groundwater monitoring network includes groundwater quality where needed. ○ Assessments and data collection efforts should provide opportunities for stakeholder involvement. 	Governor Legislature Agencies Stakeholders	Medium	Moderate	Annual	MAP Component - Monitor
Establish laws, policies, and regulations for surface and groundwater that are consistent with the MAP process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of priority surface and groundwater uses; ○ Preservation and protection of aquifer recharge areas; ○ Determination of proper well spacing; ○ Determination of maximum well production rates; and ○ Determination of maximum water withdrawals. 	Governor Legislature Agencies Stakeholders	Low	Low	Long	MAP Component - Plan

ALABAMA WATER MAP

A Process for Development and Implementation of a Statewide Water Management Plan



Alabama Water Management Road MAP



ALABAMA WATER MAP



Process Support Track

Support and funding from the Governor's Office and Legislature

Stakeholder Outreach Track

Public outreach (stakeholder survey regional workshops)

OWR water user meetings/surveys

Outreach to legislature and AWRC

Water plan website
Open input process
Social media

Focus Panel Track

Riparian/Legal

Instream flow

Local/Regional planning

COU/Permitting IBTs

Water Conservation Efficiency & Reuse

Technical Track

Water availability assessments
Surface water
Groundwater

GAP analysis and support at the state and watershed level
IBTs, Risk analysis
Instream flow
Permitting
Interstate issues

Water resources data support

Current and projected water use and consumption

AWAWG

Water Management Plan

Process Support Track

Process Support Track

PLAN

Alabama MAP Process

ASSESS

MONITOR



Process Support Track

Support and funding from the Governor's Office and Legislature

Stakeholder Outreach Track

Public outreach (stakeholder survey regional workshops)

OWR water user meetings/surveys

Outreach to legislature and AWRC

Water plan website Open input process Social media

Focus Panel Track

Riparian/Legal

Instream flow

Local/Regional planning

COU/Permitting IBTs

Water Conservation Efficiency & Reuse

Technical Track

Water availability assessments Surface water Groundwater

GAP analysis and support at the state and watershed level

IBTs, Risk analysis Instream flow Permitting Interstate issues

Water resources data support

Current and projected water use and consumption

AWAWG



Water plan website
Open input process
Social media

COU/Permitting
IBTs
Water
Conservation
Efficiency & Reuse

Water resources
data support
Current and
projected water use
and consumption

AWAWG

**Water Management
Plan**

*Process Support
Track*

*Process Support
Track*

PLAN

ASSESS

**Alabama
MAP
Process**

MONITOR



AWAWG's Outline for an Alabama Water Management Plan

Water Resources Management Plan

Vision and Principles

- Vision statement*
- Principles*
- Water availability*
- Economic stability*
- Resource protection*
- Impact of federal activities*

Water Resources Overview

- Overview of State's resources*
- Surface and groundwater resources*

Water resources data

- State agency data sharing and coordination*
- Current water use compilation*
- Surface and groundwater availability*
- Water use areas*
- Instream flow*
- Monitoring data*
- Projections for future population and water use*

Policy Areas

Stakeholder Education and Outreach

- Process for periodic feedback on plan development*

Proposed Legislative Initiatives

Funding Needs and Strategies

Alabama Water MAP Process



AWAWG PHASE 2 AUGUST, 2014

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALABAMA

August 1, 2014

STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

(334) 242-7100
FAX: (334) 242-3282

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the work you have conducted over the past two years to further water policy in the State of Alabama. Your report, *Mapping the Future of Alabama Water Resources Management: Policy Options and Recommendations*, provides many useful suggestions on actions that we can take as we work together to develop a comprehensive water management plan.

As a second phase of the process in creating a comprehensive water management plan, I am requesting that you do the following:

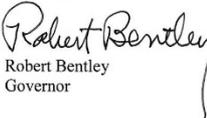
1. **Continue the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group (AWAWG).** I am directing you to reconvene the working group, and undertake the actions provided herein.
 - a. Dr. Nick Tew, Alabama State Geologist, shall serve as chairman of this group. Thank you in advance for providing Dr. Tew with your cooperation and support.
 - b. In addition to the five Alabama agencies currently comprising the group—the Department of Agriculture and Industries, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental Management, the Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA), and the Office of Water Resources (OWR) at the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs—Dr. John Christy, State Climatologist, will be added to the AWAWG.
2. **Further engage stakeholders.** A comprehensive water management plan for Alabama must seek to incorporate and balance the many interests of diverse stakeholders. Therefore, I am requesting that the AWAWG provide recommendations to me on a formal stakeholder involvement process, including composition, structure, and operational parameters. Further, you should continue to post all written comments received about the report on the AWAWG website, and meet with stakeholders, as requested.
3. **Prioritize data assessment.** Coordinate with OWR and GSA to effectively and efficiently incorporate the findings of the groundwater and surface water assessments into the AWAWG deliberative process, to help ensure that the assessments' results provide

the necessary data and information to enhance our understanding of Alabama's water resources and to guide the development of water management programs and policies for the state.

4. **Develop the Focus Panels.** Further develop the establishment and operation of the issue-based Focus Panels, as outlined in your December Report, including structure, timelines and deliverables. In addition, determine which issues need further analysis by the Focus Panels, considering those listed in the December Report and any others, as appropriate. Recommendations for establishment and operation of the focus panels shall be submitted to my Office for consideration and direction.

Thank you for your past leadership and for your continued commitment to developing a comprehensive water management plan for Alabama. Please provide my office with a progress update by October 15, 2014, and all requested recommendations by December 1, 2014. My staff is available to assist you in these matters.

Sincerely,


Robert Bentley
Governor

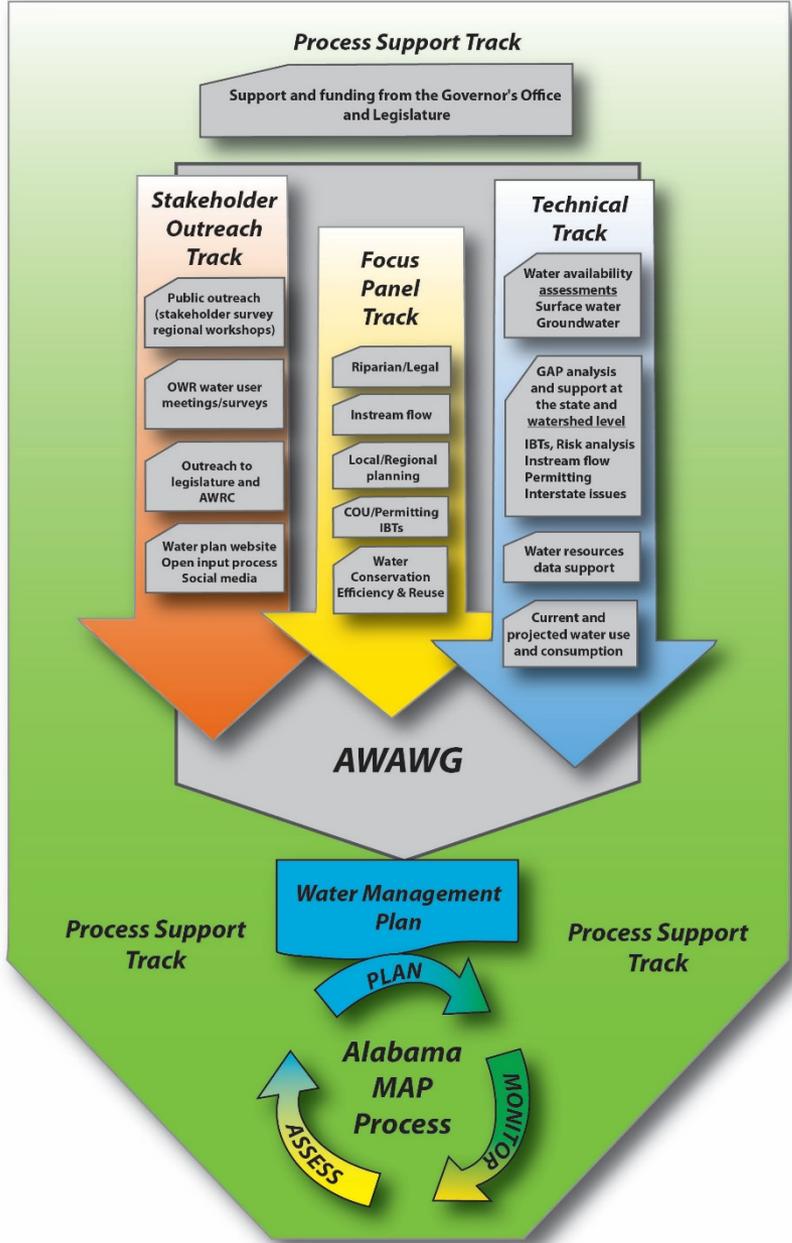
ALABAMA WATER AGENCIES WORKING GROUP (AWAWG)



Nick Tew, GSA
Chair



THE ALABAMA WATER MAP PROCESS



TWELVE ISSUE AREAS IDENTIFIED

➤ Surface and Groundwater Availability

➤ Water Resources Management

➤ Water Resources Data

➤ Instream Flow

➤ Water Conservation and Reuse

➤ Economic Development

➤ Education and Outreach

➤ Interbasin Transfers

➤ Riparian and Other Legal Issues

➤ Drought Planning

➤ Certificates of Use/Permitting

➤ Interstate Coordination



TECHNICAL TRACK--STATEWIDE WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- ◆ Coordinated effort of complimentary elements
- ◆ Focused on tangible outcomes and deliverables that provide critical information to inform water policy and management needs
- ◆ Efficient use of available funding
- ◆ Leverage resources where possible, and as appropriate, through cooperative and collaborative initiatives



STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH TRACK

- ◆ Constant engagement through AWAWG participation in various meetings, speaking opportunities, etc.
- ◆ A series of stakeholder engagement events on university campuses around the state, timed appropriately as process develops.
- ◆ Information transfer and updates through website, with functionality for stakeholder input and comments.
- ◆ Active interaction, communication, and coordination with Permanent Legislative Committee on Water Policy and Management.



FOCUS AREA PANEL TRACK

Riparian and Other Legal Issues -- Bennett Bearden, Chair

18 members

Instream Flows -- Pat O'Neil, Chair, Stan Cook, Vice-Chair

24 members

Certificates of Use, Permitting, and Interbasin Transfers -- Tom Littlepage, Chair

12 members

Local and Regional Planning -- Glen Zorn, Co-chair, Marlon Cook, Co-Chair

21 members

Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Reuse -- Cameron Handyside, Chair

24 members



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Manufacturing

Electric Utility

Environmental

Forestry

Water Utility

Agriculture

Conservation

Federal Agency

(USGS, FWS, NRCS)

Coal

State Agency

County Commissions

Academic/Research

Economic Development

Real Estate

Mining

Alabama Rural Water

Attorney General

Environmental Law

Legal

Business

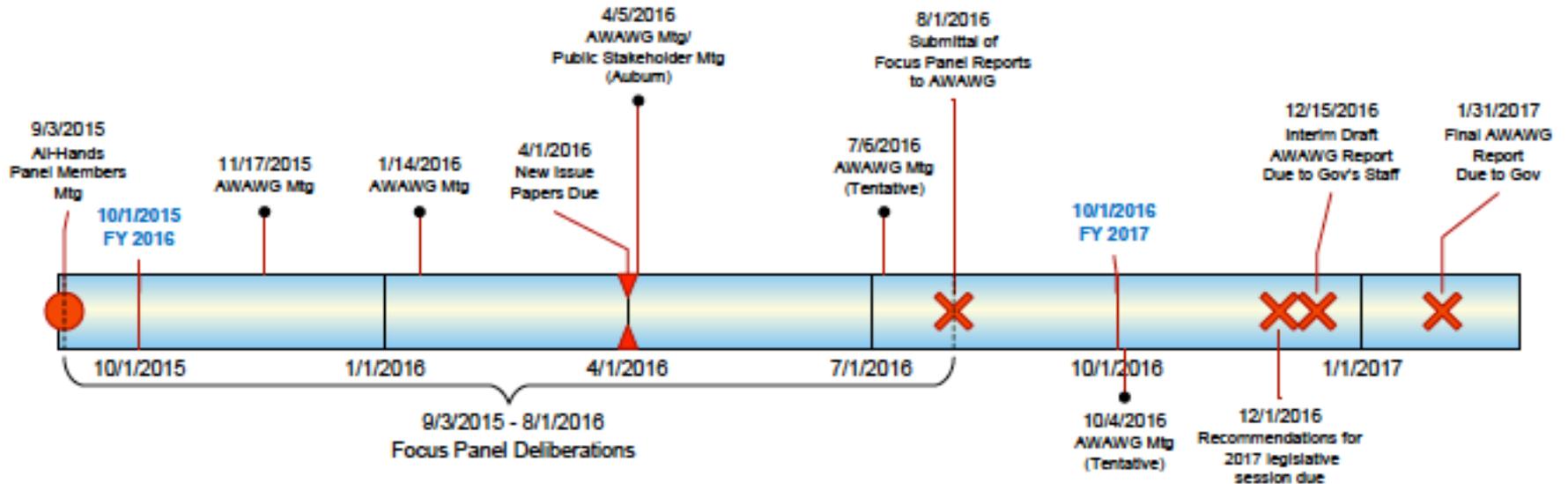
Municipalities

Development Associations

Water Associations



Alabama Water Resources Planning Timeline



GSA and OWR Surface and Groundwater Assessments

