



St. Marys River Management Committee

2006 Annual Report

To the County Commissioners:

Please accept this document as the committee's required annual report.

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) is a quasi-governmental advisory panel established by interlocal agreement between Baker and Nassau Counties in Florida, and Camden and Charlton Counties in Georgia. The committee is comprised of five voting representatives from each county: two St. Marys riverfront landowners and two at-large members, appointed by their county commissions, as well as a commissioner from each county. Representatives of Georgia and Florida state agencies serve in non-voting, advisory roles.

Summary of 2006 Committee Activity

January

- New members, Russell Barber and Michael Crawford, joined the committee, representing Charlton County and Baker County respectively.
- The committee members began planning the annual St. Marys River Cleanup, to be held in March.
- The Winter edition of the committee's newsletter, *POSM* (Patrons of the St. Marys) was mailed out.
- Discussions began about a proposal in Nassau County to amend the county's comprehensive plan to reduce wetland buffers to 25 feet. Committee members agreed to draft a letter to the Nassau County Commission, expressing their concerns about the proposed reduction.

February

- Planning activities continued for the annual river cleanup.
- The committee's 2005 Annual Report was completed and reviewed.
- Discussions continued about Nassau County's wetland buffer proposal.
- The committee was informed about an upcoming series of meetings, coordinated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR), to discuss the state's Water Conservation Plan. The committee expressed a desire to be involved with the state's efforts.

March

- The annual St. Marys River Cleanup, organized by the committee, was held on March 18. Five hundred volunteers participated in the event and 40,000 pounds of trash were collected. The annual White Oak Picnic, following the cleanup, was well attended.
- Several committee members attended Nassau County Commission board meetings during the month to speak against the proposed wetland buffer reductions.
- Committee members engaged in discussions with the St. Johns River Water Management District about possible land acquisition options along the river.

April

- Committee members participated in various discussions about growth management and how growth is impacting the river.
- Committee members located and positioned the remaining anti-pollution signs, obtained from a US Boat Foundation grant, along the river.
- Members continued to attend and speak at the Nassau County Commission board meetings, regarding the wetland setback issue.

May

- Committee members discussed the problem of the derelict barge and foam debris impacting the Amelia River and other area waterways. The committee agreed to contribute funding to the efforts of the Keep Nassau Beautiful organization, which was organizing cleanup efforts and getting quotes from construction companies to remove the foam from the barge.
- Committee members participated in discussions about septic tank failures in Camden County and how such failures impact the river.

June

- White Oak Conservation Center naturalist Lynn Provenza gave a presentation to the committee about the rice paddies on the White Oak property. The paddies are being passively managed although a restoration process is beginning.
- Committee members began engaging in discussion about an Atlantic Sturgeon restoration effort in the St. Marys River, being headed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- There was continued discussion among members about the increasing pressures of growth along the St. Marys River.

July

- Several committee members attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service meeting in Jacksonville, FL, regarding the Sturgeon repopulation efforts in the St. Marys River.
- Members attended a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) meeting at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, at which water quality impairments to an Unnamed Branch of the Nassau River were discussed.
- Jim Harris, program manager with Georgia DNR's Environmental Protection Division, gave a presentation to the committee on the future growth anticipated for Camden County and the impacts it will have on area wastewater infrastructure.
- The committee's new Web site address was activated in July, www.saintmarysriver.org.

August

- The committee enjoyed an interactive presentation from the Nassau County Watershed Action Volunteer coordinator about how land use and stormwater can impact water quality.

September

- The committee heard a Watershed Action Volunteer presentation about the St. Johns River Water Management District's new online water quality sampling database. Data available on the site include dissolved oxygen (DO), temperature, pH, chloride (freshwater), salinity (salt water), alkalinity and Secchi depth (a measure of water clarity). Committee members agreed to help recruit more WAV volunteers.
- The committee agreed to review and submit comments about the Georgia Statewide Water Planning meeting, held in September.

October

- The committee reviewed and commented on a portion of the Georgia Water Conservation Plan, which was developed through the Georgia Statewide Water Planning efforts.
- The committee formed a nominating subcommittee, responsible for nominating committee officers for 2007.
- The committee sent a letter to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, expressing its concern about the potential granting of a buffer variance in Charlton County.

November

- The committee completed its review of the Georgia Water Conservation Plan. The committee's comments were compiled into a document and letter, to be sent to The Fanning Institute (which was tasked with gathering citizen input about the plan).
- The committee voted to approve the new slate of officers for 2007.
- The Fall 2006 edition of the committee's newsletter, *POSM*, was mailed out.

December

- The committee held its annual holiday meeting/celebration at White Oak Conservation Center in Nassau County. Presentations were given about the St. Marys River from staff from The Nature Conservancy and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Committee members participated in the annual Marine Corps Toys-For-Tots toy drive.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Wildes
Co-Chairman, St. Marys River Management Committee

Dean Woehrle
Co-Chairman, St. Marys River Management Committee