

Water Quality Subcommittee (St. Marys River Management Committee)

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 7, 2011

6 p.m.

The Water Quality Subcommittee (of the St. Marys River Management Committee/SMRMC) held a meeting on February 7, 2011, at the Cedar River Seafood restaurant in Callahan, Florida.

Members in attendance:

Merrill Varn, Kevin Shell, Winifred Stephenson

Call to Order

Minutes for Water Quality Subcommittee

Data Parameters

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said that she had contacted both Georgia and Florida concerning the top 5-10 parameters for the SMRMC to follow to keep tabs on the health of the river. The consensus was to follow total phosphorus, total nitrogen (combination of several N parameters), fecal coliform, dissolved oxygen, temperature, specific conductivity, and turbidity.

Kevin Shell, Baker County, said that he had been able to filter/sort all the data from the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) for fecal coliform and related tests. He said that he would sort the SJRWMD data for the above seven tests.

Water Quality Summaries

Winifred Stephenson, Nassau County, is continuing to collect any water quality summaries that have been written about the St. Marys River by the three agencies. Georgia appears to summarize impairments only. The subcommittee has the 2001 and 2006 summaries. Alice Vick, GEPD, had previously sent an email saying that the 2011 summary was being prepared. The SJRWMD staff thinks that a general summary was written quite a while ago. They are trying to locate it. There is not a division of SJRWMD dedicated to the St. Marys River so it may take some time to find the document.

Water Quality Technical Meeting

Merrill Varn said that she has invited all three agencies to the March 3 Water Quality Technical Meeting and said that three people from each agency were planning to attend, barring travel restrictions. Charlton County will again allow the use of their county commissioner meeting room. Varn and Holly Hall, UF Conservation Clinic, are working on the meeting agenda. Both universities will give brief presentations; there will be discussion about testing methods/dates/locations and trend analysis. The SMRMC needs to be asked to approve paying for the group's lunches at the Okefenokee Restaurant.

Section 319 grant update

Merrill Varn said that Laurie Fowler (UGA) had submitted the Section 319 grant to study and remedy impairment of Horsepen Creek for fecal coliform. She reminded members that the committee had committed a minimum of 400 hours of time over a 13 month period to help organize and run eight meetings associated with the grant. She recommended that the subcommittee find a fourth member in order to spread the volunteer workload.