

St. Marys River Management Committee

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 1, 2013

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its noticed meeting on April 1, 2013, at the Nassau County Building in Callahan, Florida. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed at the end of the minutes. A quorum of members was present.

Call to Order and Housekeeping Items

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman Kevin Shell at 7:05 p.m. Members and visitors introduced themselves. The draft agenda was reviewed and approved. Previous meeting minutes from March 4, 2013, were reviewed and approved. Kevin Shell distributed a copy of the membership roster and asked members to make updates as needed. Dean Woehrle presented Myers with several checks from sponsors of the recent river cleanup event. There was discussion about county payments and contributions.

“Poop Stock” Event Discussion

In Merrill Varn’s absence, Karen Chisholm offered a brief explanation about the upcoming “Poop Stock” event. A date for the event has not yet been finalized. Chisholm said the septic tank inspections in the Browntown area have been completed. She estimated that approximately 1/3 of those tanks failed the inspection process.

2013 River Cleanup & Celebration

Dean Woehrle provided an update on the recent cleanup event and said it was a successful day. He said 781 volunteers participated, and approximately 38,500 pounds of trash were collected. He estimated that 420 tires were collected by volunteers. Unusual items pulled from the river included a mattress, a couch, and a dead alligator.

Woehrle thanked the committee members for helping with the cleanup, especially Russell Barber, Karen Chisholm and Chip Campbell. He also said that Todd Duncan, with Keep Nassau Beautiful, was a big help with organizing the event. He said that Duncan paid for the dumpsters (from Sand Hill Recycling) that were used to collect the trash.

Karen Chisholm said that the Flea Hill area was included for the first time as part of the cleanup, and she said the residents seemed appreciative of the effort. She said someone wrote a letter of thanks for the river cleanup in the local Camden newspaper.

There was discussion about the collection of tires. Kevin Shell said there were no tires collected in Baker County because another group had collected them right before the committee’s cleanup. Woehrle estimated that about 250 tires were collected from Nassau and Camden counties. Chisholm said the group she was working with collected (and disposed of) 170 tires. Al Crace, Charlton County Administrator, said he would draft an invoice to submit to the committee for the collection and removal of the 250 tires.

There was discussion about the recent sale of White Oak Plantation and about trying to get the new owners involved in next year’s cleanup.

Kevin Shell said he has ideas for new cleanup sponsors for next year.

Upcoming River Gauge Teleconference

Kevin Shell reminded the committee that there is an upcoming teleconference to discuss the necessity and funding of additional river gauges along the St. Marys River. The conference call will be on April 17 at 1 pm. The meeting/call has been noticed on the committee's website. Russell Barber and Kevin Shell plan to participate in the call.

Russell Barber said he was likely going to install his own gauge at Traders Hill, and that it would be easily accessible and could be read on a regular basis.

Melinda Granlund shared email comments from Geoff Sample, who had attended a recent meeting regarding flood risk management issues in the St. Marys watershed. Sample said that sequestration will further limit funding options for additional gauges, and that committee members may be called upon to help read/monitor staff gauges, if they are installed.

Committee Member Reports and Public Comments

Dean Woehrle said he presented the committee's 2012 Annual Report to the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners in March. Woehrle said he reminded the commissioners that they are delinquent on their funding of the committee.

Woehrle informed the committee members that several houses in his neighborhood had recently been put into Flood Zone A, on FEMA's floodplain maps. Woehrle said he has filed paperwork to have his house placed back into Flood Zone X (which is what it used to be in).

Keith Tindall said the recent rain event (on the 23rd and 24th of March) resulted in the river rising 12 inches.

Alice Vick informed the committee about another Section 319 grant program that is tasked with analyzing the section of the St. Marys River with historically low dissolved oxygen (D.O.). She said Courtney Wright has been hired to manage the grant and that Wright may be contacting members of the committee for information about the river. Vick said the grant includes funding for adding stormwater retro-fits to help improve the D.O. levels. She asked the members if they knew of areas that could benefit from a stormwater retro-fit. Karen Chisholm said there is an area in Browntown that could use such an upgrade. There was discussion about whether that area would fall under the grant's qualifications. Al Crace suggested that Karen contact Camden County's public works department and let them know about the issue.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

St. Marys River Management Committee Attendance Log – April 1, 2013

Baker County Members

Kevin Shell

Nassau County Members

Cory Black

Winifred Stephenson

Keith Tindall

Dean Woehrle

Camden County Members

Karen Chisholm

John Myers

Charlton County Members

John Meyer, Commissioner

Russell Barber

Chip Campbell

Ray Edwards

Non-voting Members

Alice Vick, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Administrative Assistant – Melinda Granlund

Visitors

Al Crace, Charlton County Administrator

Steve Nance, Charlton County