

St. Marys River Management Committee

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 6, 2013

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its noticed meeting on May 6, 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 Chip Campbell at 7:17 p.m. Members and visitors introduced themselves. The draft agenda was reviewed and amended to include discussion about a letter of support for an upcoming Section 319 grant. The amended agenda was approved. Previous meeting minutes from April 1, 2013, were reviewed and amended to remove the reference to the Treasurer's Report, which Treasurer John Myers said reflected inaccurate accounting numbers. The amended minutes were approved. John Myers, committee Treasurer, then presented the Treasurer's Report for April: the committee's main account has a balance of \$4,566.92. Myers said the committee had received a \$500 grant from Rayonier.

Letter of Support for River Basin Center Grant

Merrill Varn informed the members that the University of Georgia River Basin Center (UGARBC) is applying for a Section 319 grant for 2014-15, concerning regional wastewater planning. The UGARBC has asked the SMRMC for a letter of support, which they will include with their grant application. Varn said she thinks this potential grant dovetails nicely with the committee's current efforts to reduce the fecal coliform contamination of Horsepen Creek. There was discussion about the end results of the UGARBC grant. Alice Vick said, based on the current political climate, that the drafting of statewide legislation would be unlikely, but the drafting of local ordinances would be acceptable. Russell Barber offered a motion that Merrill Varn and Chip Campbell should draft a letter of support, on behalf of the committee. The motion was seconded by Rick Frey and approved by the committee.

River Gauge Teleconference

Russell Barber gave a brief update of the recent river gauge teleconference in April. He said the idea of a staff gauge is still under discussion, but concerns remain about costs.

Barber said he recently installed a yardstick marker on the Trader's Hill property. The placement of the marker was based on the elevation of topographical maps, but Barber said he wasn't sure about the accuracy of the maps (which indicated the area was only 5 feet about sea level). Barber also said that, regardless of the elevation accuracy, the marker is still helpful because it indicates how fast and high the water is rising.

Keith Tindall said the St. Marys River had risen about three feet, due to the heavy weekend rains.

Subcommittee Reports

Water Quality

Merrill Varn said she had spoken with Scott Pippin (UGARBC), who had informed her that all the septic tank inspections in the Browntown area had been completed. Of the 12 inspections, three (possibly four) were repairable, but the remaining eight or nine would need to be replaced. In order to have the maximum number of systems working correctly, Varn said that Pippin had decided to start with repairs and then go on to replacements. As part of the current 319 grant, UGARBC will list additional potential funding sources for the replacement of the remaining systems and for financial assistance with replacement.

Camden County has issued a permit for the demonstration system at the county park at Temple Creek Landing. The system is going to be part of extensive park renovations including a new shelter. Camden County is going to share some of the cost of the septic tank replacement as part of the park renovation. The remainder will be paid by the 319 grant. Pippin thought that both renovations and repairs will be completed by fall 2013 and would like to postpone the "Poop-Stock" festival to coincide with park re-opening. John Myers suggested that we aim for Labor Day weekend to attract Catfish Festival attendees to our event.

Land Use & Planning

John Myers mentioned that a proposal has been put forth to build some type of amusement park in Camden County between exits one and three on I-95 S (south of Highway 40). Commissioner Tony Sheppard was attending a meeting on Monday evening regarding the proposal, and has agreed to update Myers on the project and its environmental impact study. Myers said the proposal is only in the beginning stages and that there are many contingencies involved.

Committee Member Reports and Public Comments

Melinda Granlund confirmed what Treasurer John Myers had said earlier, that the committee had received a \$500 grant from Rayonier. Rayonier is hosting an awards breakfast on May 22 and has invited the SMRMC to attend. There was discussion about who from the SMRMC would attend. Granlund said she was unsure of Dean's availability, and was thinking that Kevin Shell might be able to attend. Keith Tindall said he could probably attend, if needed.

Chip Campbell updated the committee on the sturgeon project. Campbell said it seems unlikely now that the Atlantic white sturgeon will be listed as a protected or endangered species, especially because it appears that there are sturgeon that are reproducing within the St. Marys River. Campbell said there are regulations currently in place which state that fish which have been used in breeding hatcheries cannot be returned to the wild due to concerns about introducing germs/pathogens to the wild. Campbell said these regulations have led to concerns about what will happen to the sturgeon that were removed from the Altamaha River (for breeding purposes) and are currently being held at Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery in South Carolina.

Rick Frey provided an update on the use of EZBase in Georgia. He said the Georgia Department of Natural Resources issued a variance to JEA and Rayonier for EZBase use in Charlton County. One of the conditions of the variance was for JEA to submit chemical testing and analysis of the run-off. Frey said JEA is at least two months behind on submitting the required analyses. He said the Southern Environmental Law Center has submitted a public records request to get the data.

*Minutes were formally approved at SMRMC meeting on June 3, 2013.

Frey mentioned the concerns of several entities about the amount of cadmium in the EZBase product.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

**St. Marys River Management Committee
Attendance Log – May 6, 2013**

Baker County Members

James Croft, Commissioner
Mike Griffis
Greg Sheppard

Nassau County Members

Keith Tindall

Camden County Members

Karen Chisholm
Rick Frey
John Myers
Jim Wildes

Charlton County Members

John Meyer, Commissioner
Russell Barber
Chip Campbell
Ray Edwards
Merrill Varn

Non-voting Members

Alice Vick, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Administrative Assistant – Melinda Granlund

Visitors

Steve Nance, Charlton County