

*Minutes will be reviewed by SMRMC on July 12, 2021

St. Marys River Management Committee
68 Kingsland Dr., Suite B ATTN: SMRMC
Folkston, GA 31537-2872

MINUTES OF MEETING
June 6, 2021

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its noticed meeting on June 6, 2021, via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Committee members in attendance by county:

Baker – Ed Barber, Danny Norton

Camden – Commissioner John Myers, Elizabeth King, Rick Frey, Jay Smith

Charlton – Commissioner James Everett, Merrill Varn, Chip Campbell

Nassau – Keith Tindall, Dean Woehrle

Non-voting Members – Geoffrey Sample, Alice Vick

Others Present – Courtney Balling

A quorum was present.

Presentation (Coastal Septic Mapping- Rationale, Methods, and Application Courtney Balling UGA)

Courtney reviewed the design of septic tanks and what causes systems to fail. She pointed out that the projected 3-6 foot sea level rise would cause groundwater levels to rise and failure rates to increase.

In rural counties records of permitted septic systems prior to 2009 are on paper in file cabinets. On some of the older permits from the 1980s, there are only names and no addresses with which to match the permit. MAREX has been funded via Coastal Incentive Grants to try to accumulate the existing data. The project will be completed and all the data on Welstrom by the close of the grant cycle this year. SERC receives the data and posts it to the Welstrom site daily. Camden has been completed and Charlton should be completed by the end of September. Each tank will have an identifier number, the address, the owner, size, in-ground/raised mound, and the depth to water table.

The Welstrom maps include permitted septic tanks, potential/undocumented septic tanks, well, and impaired waterway layers and allows users to overlay layers to investigate potential interactions. Houses and other significant structures that do not have associated permits are listed on a separate layer as potential or undocumented tanks.

Ed asked when Georgia began requiring permits, when they began inspecting sites prior to tank installation and how that inspection is done? Courtney said permits were required in the 1950s, inspections began in the 1980s and that the inspection process was as Ed described for Florida ie change in soil color from oxidized to non-oxidized.

Elizabeth asked what happens when a tank goes out of service. Courtney said there was no documentation that she knew of.

Call to Order and Housekeeping

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Following the presentations, the meeting was called to order at 7:32pm. The June agenda and May minutes were approved as amended. The treasurer delivered the report via email and it was taken as a point of information.

Old Business

Land Use (including public access)

Baker County Boat Ramp – The work at the boat ramp should begin soon and that there were no changes at the Shoals Park. Geoff Sample said that Sara Little, the Baker County Manager, had requested that SJRWMD provide them with information regarding possible past mitigation for a project at the Shoals Park.

Water Quality

Horsepen/Temple Creek 319 – There are 33 households signed up for the program, which must be completed by October 2022. Because of a significant increase in the cost of the hardware, there may not be enough to replace the projected 24 systems. Thus far 28 systems have been inspected; of those 20 needed to have either the drainfield or the drainfield and septic tank replaced. Eight systems were functional or could be repaired during inspection. Of the 20 systems needing replacement four have been completed and one more has been started.

NPDES permits- There was nothing listed in St. Marys River Basin in Georgia. The Twin Pines permit is still listed as being in the Satilla River Basin. Chip Campbell reported that Steve Ingles had been informed and was fixing that and other clerical errors. No report for Florida.

Water Quantity (Flooding and Water Removal)

Nassau and Charlton County Stormwater- Nassau County Stormwater Task Force did not meet during May.

Charlton County is working with GDOT to see if the stormwater runoff in the Camp Pinckney subdivision can be diverted to a GDOT state ditch.

Georgia Water Council – no update

Federal, State and Local Regulations and County Comprehensive Plans

Update on No-Wake Zone Signage Nassau County- Sam Williams and Merrill Varn completed the Tracy Rd No Wake Zone application. Dean Woehrle agreed to be the applicant. John Myers said that we did not need to complete the attorney section. A motion was made and seconded and the committee approved that all three applications be completed and submitted. Keith Tindall said that the committee should investigate whether the current Scotts Landing signs can be enforced since there is no resolution number on them.

Letters of support for reclassification of St. Marys River as recreation-primary contact (swimming) in GAEPD 2019 Triennial Review of Designated Uses- After several months of study, EPD concluded that no waters within 10 miles of a NPDES discharge would be eligible for designation as a swimming river. Additional areas upriver were also deemed ineligible because of possible agricultural impacts. The segments that are eligible include Deep Creek to Boone Creek and Prospect Landing Rd to Little St. Marys River. Anna will file the application by June 30, 2021.

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Governing Documents- Interlocal Agreement discussion. The Committee discussed changes from Geoff Sample and John Myers regarding the technical advisors and membership sections. John will distribute the amended document. We will review again in July with the goal of presenting it to the commissioners prior to their August meeting. Once new Interlocal Agreement is in place, the Committee will file for a tax number so that the administrative assistant can be given a 1099.

New Business

Request for statement on Twin Pines Mine

At the May meeting, Chip presented a statement to be placed on the website to function as a summary of purpose in lieu of a position statement:

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC) is a quasi-governmental advisory council formed by an interlocal agreement of two Georgia (Camden and Charlton) and two Florida counties (Baker and Nassau) to facilitate the conservation and wise use of the St. Marys River. To that end, SMRMC engaged with the local communities as well as county and state governments to develop the St. Marys River Management Plan, which we now work to implement.

SMRMC is charged to act in good faith as an agent of due diligence on behalf of local governments and communities. As such, committee meetings serve as a public forum for the discussion of issues potentially impacting the river and its stakeholders, including such things as regulatory concerns, land use practices, and economic development projects. Current and continuing discussions include projects to address coliform bacteria contaminations, changes in Clean Water Act wetland definitions, and proposed industrial developments, including large-scale urban mixed-use projects, coal ash disposal in Chesser Island landfill and titanium dioxide sand mining operations.

A motion was made and seconded and the committee approved placing the summary on the website.

Partner Reports

Riverkeeper

Chip reported that SMRK was holding their fundraising golf tournament June 11 and 12 at White Oak. Chip said that news regarding the EPD permit for titanium mining by Twin Pines should be released soon. Anna Laws, the SMRK, spent much of May working with the University of Florida on their project to analyze rivers statewide for presence of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The results are not available. PFASs are manmade chemicals in use since the 1940s which cause wide-ranging health problems. The manufacture of some of the chemicals have been discontinued in the US though they may still be imported in goods such as carpet, leather, textiles, rubber, plastics, and packaging.

UGA- Laurie Fowler will present the final project at the August meeting.

SJRWMD – no update

EPD – Alice reminded Charlton and Camden County members that GEFA is taking applications for grants to fund updating septic tanks to sewer systems. She emphasized that these were grants and not their usual loans.

County Reports

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Baker- No update (see Land Use and Administrative)

Nassau- No update (see Regulations)

Camden- There should be news concerning the Environmental Impact Statement for the Spaceport facility by the end of June. (Also see Water Quality)

Charlton- No update

Administrative

Covid response

Merrill reported that White Oak would be able to host the August Meeting and that Steve Shurter had asked if the Riverkeeper board could be invited. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to include the riverkeeper board members. Jay Smith will take care of arrangements but both organizations need to provide him with numbers of attendees. Merrill also said that the Fire Department would not be able to offer us use of their facility because of parking and conflicting use issues. She had lined up use of the older county multi-use building. Elizabeth King will host the July meetings via Zoom. Starting in August, eight people must attend the meeting in person but provided a physical quorum is maintained, additional members may attend remotely. We will investigate costs for remote meeting if it becomes necessary.

File Storage

Shelley needs to migrate the committee files from her computer to the cloud. iCloud costs \$1/mo (\$12/yr) for 50GB, \$3/month (\$36/year) for 200gb and \$10/month (\$120/year) for 2tb. Google One costs \$2/mo ((\$24/yr) for 100GB. Google Essentials is also \$10/month (\$101/year with annual discount) and includes use of google meets. Shelley will determine how much storage is needed. Merrill and Shelley will investigate levels and ease of access by all potential users (admin, members, general public) for all options.

Public Comments

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2021 via Zoom**