

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes

December 2, 2024

Attendees:

Baker - Ed Barber, Danny Norton (FL Chair)

Nassau - Bill Cochran

Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey, John Myers

Charlton - Chip Campbell (GA Chair), Commissioner James Everett, Merrill Varn (Secretary)

Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin), Emily Floore (St. Marys Riverkeeper, by phone), Cori Hermle (SJWMD, by phone)

- Meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. A quorum was present.
- The December Agenda was approved
- Minutes from the October Meeting were approved with corrections. Notes from the November Meeting were reviewed with additions.
- Treasurer's Report: \$10,269.73

Old Business/Reports

Land Use (including public access)

Baker -

- Boat Ramp - No update.
- Shoals Park - No update.

Nassau -

- New subdivisions in the Hilliard area.

Camden -

- Blue Bridge - Camden County owns the property, but there are still items to be completed regarding the title. A site plan for the ramp exists and the project is waiting on GA-DNR for next steps.
- Temple Creek - Closure begins on December 16, 2024. GA-DNR anticipates it will last several months. New boat ramp should be open in Spring 2025.
- Raydient - No update.

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp - GA-DNR visited the new county owned facility and noted that work is needed on the parking at the site, but the ramp itself is acceptable. At this time, GA-DNR is not taking new facilities until their current list is complete. GA-DNR will provide technical assistance. Charlton County Parks & Recreation will schedule a meeting with their new County Administrator after the start of the new year.

Water Quality

- NPDES- no update.
- Spanish Creek 319- Homeland submitted the Q5 report in late November. The pump out portion of the program is complete. The bid for the repair portion of the program has been awarded for the five systems selected to be repaired or replaced. St. Marys River Keeper continues to sample the five creek sites surrounding Homeland and has ordered eDNA kits to help identify which species are contributing to the impairment. Homeland citizens continue efforts to set-up a volunteer task force to assist with city projects.
- Septic Think Tank- Currently on hold.
- E&S spreadsheet

- 25' Buffer- After the last meeting a request for clarification was sent to stormwater2020@floridaDEP.gov and no response was received. Two weeks later, another request for clarification was sent to Ronnie Hoenstine in the water quality section of FDEP Office of General Counsel and no reply has been received. Will continue seeking clarification regarding the inconsistent wording/wording abnormality.
- N/P- Waiting on White Oak to finish their BMP manual. Will need to design educational flyers for landscapers.
- FL TMDL Planning- No update.
- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting- No update.
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant- Bids are due December 11, and it is anticipated that the contract will be awarded at the December 16, 2024 City Council meeting. The City seeks to start construction in early 2025 and complete the project by the end of 2027.

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Assessment is due in December 2024 as part of a regional plan.
 - Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) - Resilient First Coast Collaborative Meeting (includes Baker and Nassau Counties)
 - Nassau County - Still working on vulnerability asset mapping - seeking to develop two plans, for east and west of I-95 - using information from Resilient Florida Plan
 - Camden County - Georgia Conservancy - working to identify grant opportunities
 - St. Marys Raydient Development - No new information. Taylor Morrison planning to build 1,300 single family homes and a golf course.
 - Charlton County- Emailed with EPD's Joe Martineza about the timeline for the approval and release of the Base Level Engineering Map.
- City Stormwater rehab -
 - Folkston Stormwater improvements- no plans to apply for funding until Waste Water Treatment Plant is complete
 - Macclenny - Working on Phase II of sewer lines replacement or re-lining. Current phase is \$4.8 million and should be completed in Summer 2025.
 - Updates needed for Hilliard, Kingsland, and St. Marys
- Georgia Water Councils - No update.

Regulatory/Comp Plans

- Nassau County No Wake Zone- Progress continues. Language needs to be in resolution format. Continuing to work with local officials
- Charlton County Comprehensive Plan - Charlton County launched their comprehensive planning process in early November with the first meeting held on November 20. Initial discussions centered on the prison swaying statistics. Meetings are scheduled for December 2024 and January 2025.
- Fishing Tournament/ Want Waste Regulations FL- Focus on education. FWC holds meetings across Florida allowing comments

Administrative

- Nassau Annual Report- no update.

County Projects

- Boating Safety/Water Quality signs at Boat Ramps- Goal is to educate the boaters from one state on the rules in the other state. It was suggested that the first signs focus on the No Wake information for the two states. Additional suggestion includes adding American flag image to signs to hopefully limit damage
 - Proposed Locations include: Baker County, Ralph Simmons, Kings Ferry, Traders Hill, Camp Pickney, Temple Creek, and St. Marys
 - Committee members will talk to each BOC about the signs when presenting the annual report.

New Business

- Nominating Committee - Ed Barber (Baker County) and John Myers (Camden County) were appointed as the Nominating Committee for 2025 Officers.
- Annual Report Review - Committee reviewed draft annual report
- Approve 2025 Meeting Calendar - Committee approved 2025 Meeting Calendar
- Review/Revise By-Law -

Partner Reports

- St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) -
 - St. Marys Riverkeeper received a \$716,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) through their National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) to support planning and capacity building for nature-based solutions for coastal resilience in the St. Marys River watershed. This grant will help the Riverkeeper and community partners prepare for increasing coastal flooding and more intense storms, while improving riverine habitats for fish and wildlife over the next 2.5 years. NCRF grants are awarded in partnership between NFWF and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Shell and Oxy. With the help of University of Georgia Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems, St. Marys Riverkeeper will develop a Watershed Resilience Plan including:
 - Prioritizing 10 nature-based solutions for implementation
 - Developing protocols to augment sediment, restore wetlands, complete stream daylighting, improve critical habitat of Atlantic Sturgeon, and protect flood-prone communities
 - Protecting flood-prone communities and enhancing resilience
 - On January 15, the SMRK will release a 7-minute video on sturgeon in the St. Marys River
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) -
 - At the November Governing Board meeting, the SJRWMD had an informational discussion on two of the District's strategic planning basins: the Lower St. Johns River Basin and the Ocklawaha River Basin. The discussion included an update on basin progress including outreach and regional priorities and objectives for FY 2024–2025.
 - Priorities for the Lower St. Johns River Basin were Water Supply, Water Quality, Northern Coastal Basin, Submerged aquatic vegetation, and Flooding in the Deep Creek area.

- That last priority, Deep Creek flooding, arose while assessing the impacts from Hurricane Milton. For the entirety of the Lower Basin SJRWMD will be evaluating possible stormwater improvement options.
- SJRWMD typically accepts one-page project submissions this time of year but accepts them throughout the year. The One-Page project submissions are intended to capture projects that are in the works, planned, proposed, or just conceptual. The Northeast Florida Estuarine Restoration Team (NERT) will be holding a meeting early next year to discuss the submitted projects ideas. The intent is not for NERT to take over the project, but to connect practitioners with a range of resources to help you fill gaps and get projects moving. Project one-pagers or questions may be submitted to Annie.Roddenberry@myfwc.com
- Lower St. Johns River Basin Plan – The SJRWMD’s draft basin plan for the Lower St. Johns River will be finished by March. That is the plan that discusses the five main priorities for the Lower St. Johns River. This is a different document than FDEP’s BMAP plans.

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Next Meeting January 6, 2025 Callahan Fire Department.