

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes

February 2, 2026

Attendees:

Baker - Danny Norton (FL Co-Chair)

Nassau - Bill Cochran, Commissioner Alyson McCullough

Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey

Charlton - Russell Barber, Chip Campbell (GA Co-Chair), Merrill Varn

Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin), Alec Jarboe (St. Marys Riverkeeper)

- The meeting was called to order at 6:17 p.m. A quorum was present
- The February agenda was approved
- The January minutes were approved with a correction
- Treasurer's Report - \$12,365.46

Old Business/Reports

Land Use (including public access)

Baker -

- Boat Ramp - Delay due to FEMA reimbursement and the Florida Forest Service \$380,000 grant - FFS extended grant period by 2.5 years - Demolition on-going - Contract has been let - No update for February
- Development Projects - Multiple projects within Baker County may impact the St. Marys River. Approximately 680 homes within the first two developments that would be on city sewer and city water - No update for February
 - Barber Point Development - old golf course - on 23A
 - Nehemiah Point - southernmost development on 23A - entrances and exits have been approved by Baker County Board of Commissioners
 - Mid Pointe Development - potentially for unincorporated Baker County
- Maple Set Recreation Area - Improvements at John M. Bethea State Forest, the upper most access point to the river - No update for February
- Reynolds Bridge - connection between northeast Baker County, Florida and southwest Charlton County, Georgia is currently closed. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has the \$8.5 million dollar rebuild is scheduled for 2028 on their Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program - - No update for February
- National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA)- Presentation scheduled for December 2 Board of Commissioners meeting
 - Includes two public feedback sessions
 - Review of 2, 4, 7, and 11-mile kayak trails within Baker County on river from Moniac to Boy Scout Camp
 - Shoals Park - Considering the idea of a recreation development 7-mile kayak trail - Meeting in January - Funding available for kayak/canoe trail - No update for February

Nassau -

- On Island
 - Brett's Waterway Cafe and Intercoastal - Business closed
 - Boutique Hotel - No update for February
 - Bioethanol plant - Concern with land use plan - \$6.6 million lawsuit filed against City of Fernandina Beach - City has until November to respond - No update for February
 - Beach re-nourishment - No update for February

- Atlantic Seafood Property - Lessee vacated - building most likely to be demolished - No update for February
- Inland Fernandina Beach - Concern about stormwater management. New areas are flooding from lighter rain events - No update for February
- Waterfront Park - No movement on construction. Work began in the spring, but stopped during the summer - No update for February
- New Fishing Pier - Possible seawall and parking construction - in front of Alachua - No update for February
- Mainland
 - Townhouse Development - No update for February
 - New Race Track development west of I-95, near the Florida Welcome Center - approximately 600 acres - No update for February
- BOCC Water-Related Conservation Acquisition Activities
 - Former Callie Kay's on the River - approximately 104 acres, CLAM Acquisition - now owned by Nassau County BOCC

Camden -

- Blue Bridge - Mediation scheduled in February
- Raydient Development - Taylor Morrison has begun construction on *Esplanade at St. Marys*, a residential subdivision and golf course - concern remains surrounding adequate water retention on site. It may be possible to obtain storm water plans - Anticipated to open around February/early 2026 - Golf Course will be complete before residential development - No update for February
- Temple Creek - Boardwalk complete - Interpretive Trail is under construction - No update for February

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp - GA-DNR conducted a technical review in March 2025 and sent a letter to Charlton County identifying necessary improvements
- Raydient - The Refuge, featuring 12 lots ranging from +/-20 to +/-45 acres along the St. Marys River, has been advertised as "coming soon" from Raydient Rural. This is near the Atlantic White Sturgeon protection area - No update for February

Water Quality

- NPDES - No new or renewed permits in Camden County or Charlton County
- Spanish Creek 319 - South Georgia Septic completed the 7th repair for the grant and Southern Septic Pumping completed the 35th pumpout. Flushables wipes seem to be a major issue.
- Septic Think Tank - Project is currently on hold, but there is still a need to do septic tank maintenance talks with any HOAs on both the Florida and Georgia sides of the river and its tributaries. There is a need to improve communication and education to help property owners understand septic tank maintenance needs and issues - No update for February
- E&S spreadsheet
 - Florida requires a 25' buffer for wetlands, but not for surface waters. The committee continues to work towards a 25' construction buffer for Florida; No update for February
 - Nassau County has included a 50' buffer in the Visioning Exercise of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update
 - Georgia does not have Nitrogen and Phosphorus (N/P) regulations; No update for February

- Educational flyer for landscapers - Will redistribute to local hardware stores in Camden and Charlton Counties in February
- FL TMDL Planning - No update for February
- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting - No update for February
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant - No update for February - Pender Lloyd, Folkston City Manager, reported that construction has begun on the new system, which will increase capacity to 1.25 MGD. The project is scheduled for completion in December 2026, with some final installations potentially extending into the first two quarters of 2027. The current facility has a capacity of 1.0 MGD.
 - The GEO Group is in the process of converting the D. Ray James prison facility to expand ICE capacity, bringing the total population to approximately 2,800–3,000 individuals. When both the prison and ICE facility were previously at capacity (3,000), the city's treatment facility was processing 0.75 MGD - No update for February

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Vulnerability study still in progress - Working with NEFL Regional Council - deadline extended to March 2026
 - Fara Ilami will make presentation at upcoming meeting (April/May)
 - Nassau County - Following 2023 Vulnerability Assessment County awarded funding for an Adaptation Action Plan - working with City of Fernandina Beach using the same consultant to prevent duplication of services - No update for February
 - Town of Hilliard - working on Vulnerability Study - No update for February
 - Camden County - County has begun work on stormwater grant, but waiting on progress update - No update for February
 - Charlton County - Vulnerability and Stormwater- EPD's Base Level Engineering Map is completed and is being uploaded to the online viewer. Updates are slowly being added to the St. Marys River Watershed
 - No update for February, but work in-progress by Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) and St. Marys Riverkeeper may help with Vulnerability Assessment
- City Stormwater rehab -
 - Folkston Stormwater improvements - No update for February
 - Macclenny - Nearing completion of Phase II and anticipate applying for Phase III - No update for February
- Georgia Water Councils - Coastal Water Council met in December - No update for February

Regulatory/Comp Plans

- Nassau County No Wake Zone - Currently on hold - No update for February
- Baker County Comprehensive Plan - Consultant still working on the plan - No update for February
- Nassau County Comprehensive Plan - Currently in progress - community visioning sessions have taken place throughout 2025 - No update for February
- Resiliency Plans - The Committee submitted comments on the Section 309 Assessment and 2026–2030 Strategy. The Coastal Resources Division (CRD) acknowledged receipt of the letter and reported that they are coordinating with Dewberry regarding Base Level Engineering (BLE) maps, as well as with FEMA concerning their mapping efforts. CRD also indicated they will

remain in contact with the St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) and the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NFRC) regarding their respective resiliency plans - No update for February

Administrative

- 2024 Annual Report
 - Presentation to Nassau County pending
- 2025 Annual Report - Presentations in February/March to County Commissions
 - Baker - Will work with County Manager Sara Little
 - Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey
 - Charlton - Georgia Co-Chair Chip Campbell
 - Nassau - Commissioner McCullough

County Projects

- Discussion of possible new project for 2026 - No update for February
 - Updates to ARC Story Map - Goal of adding new GIS layer to identify areas for possible conservation - Will need to engage third-party to assist with this effort

New Business

- No new business in February

Partner Reports

- St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) - No update for February
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) - No update for February

Committee Member Reports

- No reports for January

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meeting March 2, 2026 Callahan Fire Department