

## St. Marys River Management Committee Reports

May 4, 2026

### Attendees:

Baker - Commissioner Ronald Mann, Danny Norton (FL Co-Chair)

Nassau - Commissioner Alyson McCullough

Camden - William Story

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

Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin), Cori Hermle (SJRWMD, Virtual)

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was present
- The May agenda was approved
- The April minutes were approved
- Treasurer's Report - \$11,578.40 (as March 2, 2026)

### 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 - Communications with FEMA were suspended due to the Federal Government Shut Down, but have resumed
- 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
  - Barber Point Development - old golf course - on 23A - No update for May
  - Nehemiah Point - southernmost development on 23A - entrances and exits have been approved by Baker County Board of Commissioners - No update for May
  - Mid Pointe Development - Application submitted in early May for unincorporated Baker County - Would have private water and sewer
- Maple Set Recreation Area - Improvements at John M. Bethea State Forest, the upper most access point to the river - No update for May
- 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 May
- National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) - No update for May
  - Review of 2, 4, 7, and 11-mile kayak trails within Baker County on river from Moniac to Boy Scout Camp
  - Shoals Park - Working on Canoe Trail - Also working to make the area more accessible and kid friendly

Nassau -

- On Island
  - Boutique Hotel - No update for May
  - 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 May
  - Beach re-nourishment - No update for May

- Atlantic Seafood Property - Lessee vacated - building most likely to be demolished - No update for May
  - Inland Fernandina Beach - Concern about stormwater management. New areas are flooding from lighter rain events - No update for May
  - Waterfront Park - No movement on construction. Work began in the spring, but stopped during the summer - No update for May
  - New Fishing Pier - Possible seawall and parking construction - in front of Alachua - No update for May
  - Mainland
    - Townhouse Development - No update for May
    - New Race Track development west of I-95, near the Florida Welcome Center - approximately 600 acres - No update for May
    - BOCC continues to negotiate for future conservation easements. One property is approximately 1,400 acres - No update for May
    - BOCC is working on a 12-month moratorium on Data Centers. Two Public Hearings will be held as part of the process
- Camden -
- Blue Bridge - Mediation completed and working to complete the deed transfer - No update for May
  - 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 May
  - Temple Creek - Boardwalk complete - Interpretive Trail is under construction - Camden County Public Works is working on project, completion anticipated in the late Fall 2026
- 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 - Progress on this item is currently paused as discussions with the County continue
    - Potential concern with silt moving into the river from the existing ramp on the property
    - County Administration indicated they would review what the county could do about the roads leading to the boat ramp
  - 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 May

### **Water Quality**

- NPDES - No new or renewed permits in Camden County or Charlton County that would impact the St. Marys River
- Spanish Creek 319 - Continuing to work on one complicated septic tank - Flushable wipes remain a concern for septic tanks
- 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 - No update for May

- 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 May
  - Georgia does not have Nitrogen and Phosphorus (N/P) regulations; No update for May
- FL TMDL Planning - No update for May - Need to identify someone to take lead on this project. There is a need to identify the baseline for N/P
- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting - No update for May
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant - No update for May - 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 May

### **Water Quantity**

- Four County Stormwater
  - Baker County - Working to schedule presentation from Fara Ilami at an upcoming meeting
  - 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 May
    - Town of Hilliard - working on Vulnerability Study - No update for May
  - Camden County - County has begun work on stormwater grant, but waiting on progress update - No update for May
  - 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 May, but work in-progress by Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) and St. Marys Riverkeeper may help with Vulnerability Assessment
    - Will consider this to be on hold
- City Stormwater rehab -
  - Folkston Stormwater improvements - No update for May
  - Macclenny - Nearing completion of Phase II and anticipate applying for Phase III - No update for May
- Georgia Water Councils - Suwannee-Satilla Water Council Meeting scheduled for May 6; Coastal Water Council scheduled for May 18

### **Regulatory/Comp Plans**

- Nassau County No Wake Zone - Currently on hold - No update for May
- Baker County Comprehensive Plan - Two Public Hearings are scheduled for this summer
- Nassau County Comprehensive Plan - Currently in progress - community visioning sessions have taken place throughout 2025 - No update for May

### **Administrative**

- 2024 Annual Report
  - Presentation to Nassau County pending

### **County Projects**

- Possible new project for 2026
  - 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 May

### ***Partner Reports***

- St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) - No update for May
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)
  - The SJRWMD is now under a modified severe water shortage
  - There is an issue with the availability of some statistics and trends reports on the website. The reports are currently available by contacting the district as they work through the issue with ESRI

### ***Committee Member Reports***

- Chip Campbell conducted a successful field trip to the headwaters of the St. Marys River
  - Possibility of second trip while water levels are still low

### ***Public Comments***

None

### ***Adjournment***

Meeting Adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

**Next Meeting June 1, 2026 Callahan Fire Department**