

St. Marys River Management Committee Reports

April 7, 2025

Attendees:

Baker - Commissioner Ronald Mann, Danny Norton (FL Co-Chair)
Nassau - Bill Cochran
Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey
Charlton - Chip Campbell (GA Co-Chair), Merrill Varn (Secretary)
Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin)

- A quorum was not present; reports were received but no business was conducted.

Old Business/Reports

Land Use (including public access)

Baker -

- Boat Ramp - Awaiting further guidance from FEMA regarding next steps. There is a potential plan to rebuild the dock and ramp at a new location slightly upriver. However, progress is complicated by an existing "open project" with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), stemming from the short timeframe between the original dock's completion and its subsequent destruction by Hurricane Debby.
- Shoals Park - No update in April
- Development Projects - Limited future to this development occurring inside the City of Macclenny due to the city's Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) restricting the allowable water usage

Nassau -

- On Island
 - Brett's Waterway Cafe - No update in April
 - Bioethanol plant - No update in April
 - Waterfront Park - No update in April
 - Marina - No update in April
 - Atlantic Seafood Property - No update in April
- Mainland
 - Townhouse Development - No update in April

Camden -

- Blue Bridge - Still awaiting decision on property finalization
- Temple Landing - GA-DNR completed the reconstruction of the ramp and it is open to the public
- 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

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp - No update in April
- Raydient - No update in April

Water Quality

- NPDES - No new or renewed permits in Camden County or Charlton County
- Spanish Creek 319 - Next septic tank will be repaired this week. The next quarterly newsletter has been printed and cut; it will be distributed by April 30. The revised monitoring plan should be submitted to GA-EPD by April 30

- 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
- E&S spreadsheet
 - Florida does not have a 25' buffer to surface waters only to wetlands. Nassau County requires grading permits for all land disturbance activities, but they will not match the Georgia requirements
 - Georgia does not have Nitrogen and Phosphorus (N/P) regulations-
 - White Oak is hosting a Best Management Practice (BMP) manual workshop in early May. Four Camden/Charlton golf courses (Folkston, Laurel Island, Osprey Cove, and Trident) have been invited along with attempts to invite those connected to the new golf course for Esplanade at St. Marys
 - Educational flyer for landscapers printed and given to Ace Hardware for distribution in Charlton County. Flyers sent to Camden County Floodplain Manager for distribution in Camden County. There is an identified need for some modifications to the flyer to improve excitement
 - Triennial Review - Letter sent from SMRMC to GA-EPD regarding N/P criteria and added specific references to Georgia law and EPD rules
- FL TMDL Planning - No update in April
- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting - No update in April
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant - No update in April

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Drainage concerns in multiple locations throughout the county. Difficulty in maintaining ditches. Vulnerability study should be available later this spring.
 - Nassau County - Applied for a grant to assist with resiliency planning/BLE Maps. The Vulnerability Study done by the Balmoral group will be sent to the Board of Commissioners in March - No update for April
 - Camden County - Stormwater grant for unincorporated Camden County - held kickoff meeting in late February - will have status update at May meeting
 - 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
- City Stormwater rehab -
 - Folkston Stormwater improvements - No update for April
 - Macclenny - No update for April
 - Updates needed for Hilliard, Kingsland, and St. Marys
- Georgia Water Councils - No update for April

Regulatory/Comp Plans

- Nassau County No Wake Zone - No update for April
- Charlton County Comprehensive Plan - no update until draft plan is ready
- Fishing Tournament/ Want Waste Regulations FL - New fishing tournaments have begun, and activities are being monitored to determine if any regulatory recommendations are needed. The

first tournament, held on March 22, 2025, did not raise any concerns or warrant recommendations at this time.

Administrative

- 2024 Annual Report
 - Presented to Baker County - February 18, 2025
 - Presented to Camden County - February 18, 2025
 - Presented to Charlton County - February 20, 2025
 - Scheduled to be presented to Nassau County - April 14, 2025

County Projects

- Boating Safety signs at Boat Ramps
 - Charlton County agreed to move forward with posting the boating safety signage. However, there were concerns about whether the wording had been reviewed by DNR and FWC. While the language on the signs is directly copied from state rules and regulations, the committee will need to rearrange the signage for both the Georgia and Florida sides. The boat ramp sign should also be placed at the top of the Georgia side. Additionally, approval from FWC is required before proceeding with the installation.
 - Sam Williams with GA-DNR stated that SMRMC could reorder the list without needing reapproval
 - Brian Rehwinkel with FWC forwarded our request to Waterway Management for review

New Business

- No new business in April

Partner Reports

- St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) -
 - River Cleanup: Scheduled for April 19. Many volunteer slots are still available in Charlton and Baker Counties.
 - EDP Mine: No new updates from EDP; a decision on the mine is still pending.
 - Escambia Street (Fernandina Beach): This street has been removed, which is expected to improve water quality and enhance local resilience.
 - NFWF Grant: Work is underway to finalize contracts and develop job descriptions and RFQs in preparation for onboarding new team members. SMRK will provide monthly updates to the SMRMC, including opportunities for engagement.
 - New Water Quality (WQ) Coordinator: A new coordinator is now leading the Citizen Science Volunteer Program. Upcoming WQ trainings and community events focused on water quality education will be announced soon.
 - Georgia SWAP: The public comment deadline for the Georgia Statewide Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is Friday, April 11. The Florida SWAP is not scheduled for review until 2029.
 - Georgia Legislative Session: The session ended on Friday, April 4, 2025. No Okefenokee-related bills—neither the full ban nor the moratorium on mining—advanced out of committee.

- Florida Legislative Session: Several bills are in progress that may impact waterways. More details are available in the [SMRK newsletter](#). Notably, SB 1118 is no longer active; however, paragraph 5 (redefining bioethanol) is being considered for inclusion in other legislation. Its status remains uncertain.
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) -
 - No update in April

Committee Member Reports

- No Committee Member Reports for April

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Next Meeting May 5, 2025 Callahan Fire Department.