

St. Marys River Management Committee Report

November 4, 2024

Attendees:

Baker -
Nassau - Bill Cochran, Keith Tindall (by phone)
Camden -
Charlton - Chip Campbell (GA 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 - No update.
- Shoals Park - No update.
- DOT meeting Nov 12 and 14 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study of the Richardson Road bridge over a tributary (South Prong) of the St. Marys River.

Nassau -

- Approximately 130 homes have been approved near Hilliard with another 200 homes in the development process.
- Rayonier Advanced Materials (RYAM) is not applying for a water discharge permit for their proposed bioethanol plant in Fernandina Beach.

Camden -

- Blue Bridge - no update
- Temple Creek - Work scheduled to begin in December 2024
- Raydient - Development to fill 11.1 acres of freshwater wetlands and offsetting by utilizing 66.72 legacy wetland credits and 8.34 2018 wetland credits.

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp - Still in progress, but slowed through switching County Administrators. Combination of the County Clerk and the County Parks and Recreation Supervisor are now working on the application.
- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge - Zone around current park boundaries allows for potential expansion. Proposal designed to enable voluntary actions to protect hydrological integrity, conserve wetlands and key wildlife habitat, and create fuel reduction zones to help protect neighboring properties. This can allow interested property owners to voluntarily sell land to the Refuge. Property acquisition outside of the zone requires Congressional approval. This is for willing sellers only.

Water Quality

- NPDES- no new or renewing permits in St Marys River basin in Charlton or Camden, however, another bulkhead repair required a wetland buffer encroachment.
- Spanish Creek 319- All 25 residential tanks are pumped and invoiced. Special thanks to Southern Septic Pumping for donating inspections on the last 11 tanks.
 - DPH is in the process of prioritizing repairs and it will be discussed at the next PSC meeting on November 20.
 - The bids for the repair phase were due Oct 28 and opened Oct 29. Homeland City Council will vote on their choice for the contractor at their November 14 meeting.

- Tabling opportunity at Founders Day 1, Chip Campell will man the table. Homeland is also distributing flyers at the gate about the grant.
- Septic Think Tank- Currently on hold.
- E&S spreadsheet
 - 25' Buffer- Cori Hermle sent link to ERP Application Handbook. On page 10-14 is the reference to the buffer (see below). Throughout the entire remainder of the handbook the phrase is wetlands and other surface waters. In this paragraph only the wording is wetlands only. The UGA study several years ago pointed out this omission and suggested its revision. Who do we need to approach at DEP? Can SJRWMD serve as a liaison? - Clarification request sent to stormwater2020@floridaDEP.gov.
 - Excerpt: *Secondary impacts to the habitat functions of wetlands associated with adjacent upland activities will not be considered adverse if buffers, with a minimum width of 15 ft. and an average width of 25 ft., are provided abutting those wetlands that will remain under the permitted design, unless additional measures are needed for protection of wetlands used by bald eagles for nesting, or listed species for nesting, denning, or critically important feeding habitat. The mere fact that a species is listed does not imply that all of its feeding habitat is critically important. Buffers shall be maintained in an undisturbed vegetated condition, except when the permit requires removal of exotic and nuisance vegetation or the planting of appropriate native species to prevent adverse secondary impacts to the habitat functions of the wetlands. Drainage features such as spreader swales and discharge structures are acceptable within the buffer, provided the construction or use of these features does not adversely impact wetlands. Where an applicant elects not to use buffers of the above-described dimensions, buffers of different dimensions, or other measures, may be proposed to provide the required reasonable assurance. Wetlands or other surface waters shall not be filled to*
 - N/P-
 1. Point of sale fertilizer flyers- Russell said that most of the residential application is by landscape companies. He said he thought Ace Hardware would allow distribution of educational flyers promoting testing before fertilizing, setting spreader, avoiding application before heavy rain, shielding the water side, and sweeping pellets off hardscape.
 2. Management plans for golf courses- Considering meeting at White Oak in January to go over best management practices and to help the non-members write plans. Waiting for White Oak to complete their new BMP manual.
 3. Use of fertilizers by agriculture and forestry in the two counties. GFC reported that there are no regulations other than what is in the BMP manual. If an incident is reported the protocol is to send it to EPD. No incidents have been reported in Camden County. Do not have information from Charlton County, but will follow up with Charlton and with Ag agents before December.
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant- Folkston will issue the RFP in early November via newspaper. There is a pre-bid meeting November 26, bids are due December 11, and the contract will be awarded at the December 16, 2024 City Council meeting. The City aims to start construction in early 2025 and complete the project by the end of 2027.
- FL TMDL Planning- No update.

- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting- There is little movement on the river permitting until decisions are made about lakes. They are looking at chemical parameters that could be monitored monthly.

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Assessment is due in December 2024 as part of a regional plan.
 - Camden County - No update.
 - Charlton County- Charlton Stormwater Vulnerability and Infrastructure Grant- Charlton County voted not to apply for the Coastal Incentive Grant for vulnerability map layer, prioritized stormwater infrastructure map layer, highest priority gap, and research on policies to protect county from stormwater complaints. The County Attorney felt that they already knew where the worst flooding areas were and didn't need a third party map. The Board of Commissioners was concerned about the time commitment required of the Roads Department and about increased liability if the county published a flooding map. Merrill will continue to follow up with EPD on the Base Level Engineering Map which is under QC review and should be released by December 2024. EPD has already begun the process of getting the data incorporated into D-FIRM and FEMA but said that it will take years.
- 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.
- 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
- Fishing Tournament/ Want Waste Regulations FL- Focus on education. Since it is not breaking a specific law, there are limited options available.

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.

New Business

None

Partner Reports

- SJRWMD- No update.
- St. Marys Riverkeeper - No update.

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Next Meeting December 2, 2024 Callahan Fire Department.