**Water Quality Priorities based on UGA Law Practicum Study of State and Local regulations that Affect the Water Quality of the St. Marys River (Septic, Stormwater, and Buffer)**

**Septic Goals from St. Marys River Management Plan**

* Establish consistent and adequate septic setbacks
* Encourage proper maintenance of septic systems within river corridor

**Current Setbacks**

* Baker– 75 ft (state only)
* Nassau– 100 ft (county overlay)
* Camden– 100 ft (county overlay)
* Charlton– 100 ft but only on portions (state only)
* No protection on tributaries unless they are above 400 cfs

**Setback Recommendations**

* Baker and Charlton pass 100 ft. overlay/ordinance with no drainfields on the entire main stem for uniformity (don’t rely on state law)
* All counties add 50 ft. protection via overlay or ordinance for tributaries

**Encourage proper management**

* Maintenance will be an ongoing issue, regardless of advances in technology and siting
* Need to solve maintenance issue before this becomes a health/environmental threat or extreme economic hardship for your citizens when they need to replace systems bc of lack of maintenance

**Maintenance Recommendations**

* Follow Camden County’s lead on addressing failing systems contributing to contamination of the river by pursuing 319 grants like the three-phase program on Horsepen/Temple Creeks
* Pass county ordinances requiring 5-year pump-outs regardless of ownership status - good start by Charlton then Camden where inspection required with change in name on electric/solid waste service *note EPA now says that septic tank pumpouts are necessary to adequately inspect on site septic systems*
* Investigate the potential for septic utilities, at least at the subdivision scale
* Reconstitute the “Septic Think Tank” and meet at least annually.

**Stormwater/Buffer goals from St. Marys River Management Plan**

* Promote consistent regulations on both sides of the river

**Current Buffer/Stormwater Regulations**

* Have massive amount of detail but no overall picture
* there is a good deal of confusion even between different departments of same county.

**Buffer/Stormwater Recommendation**

* Setup and convene meetings one or several of appropriate county staff across the jurisdictions to come to agreement on
  + What programs are currently in place and how they work together (start w/ a strawman like during early stages of septic think tank process)
  + Gaps in protection
  + Potential strategies for addressing these gaps