

St. Marys River Management Committee Reports
April 3, 2023

Attendees:

Baker: Ed Barber, Danny Norton (FL Chair), James Croft

Nassau: Paul Lore, Keith Tindall

Charlton: Merrill Varn (Secretary), Chip Campbell (GA Chair)

Camden: Scott Brazell, Ben Casey, Rick Frey, John Myers

Other: Courtney Balling (Admin), Emily Floore (SMRK)

Housekeeping:

Meeting was called to order at 7:06

April Agenda approved by committee with addition of a comment letter to the City of St Marys

March Report approved by committee with changes to comments on Raydient development

Treasurer was not present, no change in the account

Old Business

Land Use

- Baker County
 - Boat Ramp - The original plan was scaled back and work should begin soon with DEP approval
 - Shoals Park - The ATV trail is being relocated
- Camden County
 - Blue Bridge Access - No update
 - Temple Creek Landing - No update
 - Spaceport - No update
 - Raydient Development - No update
- Charlton County
 - Camp Pinckney Land - Hampton Raulerson (county administrator) is meeting with Alexander Land this week and documents for the agreement are being drawn up
- Nassau County
 - Paul Lore is keeping an eye on the master plan for the port that includes more waterfront development. The city is trying to add more parking spaces at the marina which means acquiring new waterfront land. Unclear whether or not potential storm water runoff issues are being addressed. A 19 room boutique hotel is also being built on the waterfront. Public boat access may be threatened by these developments and will be monitored

Water Quality

- NPDES Permits– No new permits
- Spanish Creek (Clay Branch project) – SOW is still with EPA. Unsure of when funds will be distributed, but activities will begin in mid-May and kick off event will take place June 10th
- Septic Think Tank Follow Up (bacteria) – No update
- E&S Spreadsheet (sediment) – Scott Brazell sent it to Nassau and we are awaiting responses. Charlton County confirmed that their ordinances are same as Camden

- GA EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting Strategy (N,P) - No update

Water quantity

- Four County Stormwater Management
 - Charlton County Map Layer - Merrill checked on the status with SGRC and they should follow up soon
 - Camden County Resiliency Plan - No update
- Water councils
 - Coastal Georgia Regional Water Council – Has not had a meeting and none is scheduled
 - Suwanee Satilla Regional Water Council – Water plan was finalized and sent to EPD, will be open for a 45 comment period soon
- NFRWSP 30 year water plan – No update

Regulation/Comprehensive Plans

- Nassau County
 - No Wake Zone - Paul Lore scheduled a meeting to clear up any lingering confusion and move the project along
- Charlton County
 - 100 foot overlay - Waiting for Charlton County to put it into municode

Administrative

- Annual report distribution
 - Baker- need to check and make sure that it was delivered
 - Nassau- delivered March 13
 - Camden- delivered on March 21
 - Charlton- delivered February 23

New Business

- Comment letter addressing Florida HB 1197/SB 1240 - Proposed bill would prohibit local municipalities from adopting environmental protection policies that are stricter than state regulations and threatens to withhold funds from local governments that don't comply. It went to subcommittee on 3/6 but is most likely DOA. Hasn't been heard by any committee and the governor doesn't seem to be in support. SMRK will keep an eye on this in case it reappears next year, but currently there isn't a need for a comment letter.
- Comment letter to City of St Marys on Raydient development - Rick Frey took the issue to a city council meeting and made verbal comment, but the committee would like to follow up. The committee voted in favor of Merrill Varn drafting a letter to the city reiterating our request that state regulations re: freshwater wetlands are followed.

Partner Reports

- SJRWMD – No report
- Riverkeeper –
 - FL HB 177 (Safe Waterways Act) was supported by SMRK and passed unanimously. It focuses on better communication to the public on fecal coliform levels in waterways.
 - FL HB 1191/SB 1258 has to do with phosphogypsum (radioactive waste from p fertilizer manufacturing). The state is trying to find a use for the 25 “gyp stacks” in the state and has proposed experimenting with it as a road material or construction aggregate. Phosphogypsum is radioactive and poses environmental

and public health threats if aerosolized or allowed to enter waterways. Admin will distribute copies of both bills to the committee.

- SMRK has done a series of lunch and learns that are on their website. They;ve also started running boat tours out of Traders Hill and are hoping to start doing them out of St Marys Cove. SMRK is also hosting GA EPD on a swamp and river tour to hear about mining concerns. River cleanup is April 15th. Currently lacking volunteers in Charlton and Baker. Registration is on the website. DEP found that e coli source at Alligator Creek is largely avian and SMRK is working with the county to turn it into some sort of conservation area. Jackson Creek is of new interest after high e. coli readings.

- GA EPD - No report

County Reports

- DEP is requesting that SJRWMD develop watershed level standards for stormwater (n, p, sediment, etc). Merrill will reach out to Richard Musgrove to possibly report to the committee

Public Comment none

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35