

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes
May 6, 2024

Attendees:

Baker- Danny Norton (FL Chair), James Croft (by phone)

Nassau-

Camden- Ben Casey (Commissioner), Rick Frey, John Myers, Jay Smith

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

Other- Jenifer Hogan (guest)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM. A quorum was present.

The Agenda was approved with the addition of a comment letter concerning the permit for Folkston Water Pollution Control Facility.

The Minutes from the April meeting were approved.

Land Use

Baker-

- Boat Ramp - no news
- Shoals Park- The new ranger, Jimmy Nichols, has been onboarded and the Board of Commissioners is looking into more effective security regulations.

Nassau- Paul Lore emailed the following update:

- Alachua Street Stormwater project delayed because construction cost doubled.
- Lots of work along the Fernandina waterfront with Brett's being demolished and a new restaurant constructed. The main concern going forward is adequate parking. A meeting May 7 will focus on the options. One proposal is to close the Fernandina Harbor boat ramp on Front St; there is significant opposition.
- The field is cleared at Dee Dee Bartels boat ramp and Nature Park on Pogey Place north of town.
- RYAM is in the permitting process for adding equipment to refine mill effluent to produce bioethanol at their Gum St location.
- Port of Fernandina received a very poor facilities/building report. The Port also erected a facilities tent that blocks the river view for some residents.
- Further south on the Island, the Amelia Baptist Church has proposed a 24-unit (two four-story buildings) development on their property on the Amelia River. The River Towers proposal at the south end is still under litigation.
- There is a proposal to create Class C airspace over Amelia Island to improve air safety.

Camden-

- Blue Bridge- In April, the judge approved a consent order resolving most of the remaining issues with the county's ownership of the land.
- Temple Creek- no news
- Raydient- Jamie Stein, Planning Director City of St. Marys, has examined the existing environmental ordinance and thinks it is adequate to protect isolated

wetlands. She will meet with the Erosion and Sedimentation Inspector to confirm. Raydient has not submitted any development plans.

Charlton-

- Camp Pinckney land- The County Board of Commissioners has approved the deed and returned it to Alexander Land for their signature.

Water Quality

NPDES permits- Merrill Varn reported that the City of Folkston has applied for a permit (GA0050336) to operate their new Water Pollution Control Facility. This new NPDES permit will allow discharge of up to 1.0 MGD to Clay Branch. The permit also includes effluent limitations and monitoring requirements for the land application of up to 0.3 MGD of treated domestic wastewater onto a dedicated LAS in Charlton County, and for the discharges from the associated underdrain system. The current plant is authorized to discharge up to 0.28 MGD to Clay Branch and 0.5 MGD to Spanish Creek, and apply up to 0.3 MGD of treated domestic wastewater on a LAS, and to discharge from the underdrain system under NPDES Permits No. GA0027189 and GA0037613. These NPDES permits will both be terminated upon authorization to operate under NPDES Permit No. GA0050336.

Spanish Creek (Clay Branch 319 Grant)- Merrill reported that the first two of 25-28 tanks have been pumped. Both systems were in good condition. A subcommittee is working on a volunteer event for June or July. Water sampling has shown a slight increase in bacterial counts at various sites.

Septic Think Tank- no news

E&S spreadsheet- no news

Deep Creek Impairment (WBID 2196)- no news

FL TMDL Planning- no news. Merrill asked that Ed Barber advise Kevin Mc Donnell that the new permit for the Folkston WPCF includes language stating that the effluent limits must meet Florida standards for N and P..

Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting- no update.

Rick Frey reported that the bacterial levels in Escambia Slough/Alligator Creek (Fernandina Beach) continue to increase.

Water Quantity

Stormwater Management/Resiliency-

- Baker- no news
- Nassau- no news
- Camden- Ben Casey said the new Resiliency Center should open soon.
- Charlton- no news
- City Stormwater rehab- In Fernandina, Alachua Street Stormwater project delayed because construction cost doubled.

Georgia Water Councils- Chip Campbell provided an update on SMRMC activities over the last five years at the April 18 Coastal Water Council meeting. He said it went well and there were lots of questions and discussion.

Regulatory/Comp Plans

Nassau County No Wake Zone- Paul has addressed the insufficiencies in the no wake zone applications and will submit the revised applications this week.

Fishing Tournament/ Want and Waste Regulations FL- no report

State Legislation- Chip reported that the Georgia Legislature had passed a form of the bill that placed a three year moratorium on dragline mining. He will report on the details at the June meeting.

Administrative

New Admin- Chip said that Jenny Sweat's spring and fall canoe trip schedule would make it difficult for her to attend meetings. Jenifer Hogan will pursue a UNF contact.

Annual Report- The report was emailed to all counties in January. Ed presented the Annual Report April 2. Nassau Co members need to provide the date that Nassau BOCC accepted the report.

County Projects

The committee discussed various options including a promotional event, monofilament canisters, signage with QR code linked to the webmap, and cooperative efforts with SMRK.

New Business

The committee approved a comment letter to EPD thanking them for requiring that Folkston WPCF adhere to Florida nitrogen and phosphorus effluent limits and requesting that EPD use pH limits more in line with averages and ranges on the upper St. Marys instead of the 6.0-8.5 state limits. Merrill will get the upper river range and mean from Reid Jackson.

Partner Reports

SJRWMD- None

Riverkeeper- SMRK conducted several Strategic Planning Meetings during April.

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Next Meeting June 3, 2024 Callahan Fire Department.