

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes

November 3, 2025

Attendees:

Baker - Commissioner Ronald Mann, Danny Norton (FL Co-Chair)

Nassau - Bill Cochran, Commissioner Alyson McCullough

Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey

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

Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin), Cori Hermle (SJRWMD, Virtual)

- The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. A quorum was present
- The November Agenda was approved
- The September minutes were approved
- The October reports were accepted

Old Business/Reports

Land Use (including public access)

Baker -

- Boat Ramp - Delay due to FEMA reimbursement and the Florida Forest Service \$380,000 grant - FFS extended grant period by 2.5 years
- Development Projects - Multiple projects within Baker County may impact the St. Marys River. Nearly 700 homes within the first two developments that would be on city sewer and city water
 - Barber Point Development - old golf course - on 23A
 - Nehemiah Point - southernmost development on 23A
 - Mid Pointe Development - potentially for unincorporated Baker County
- Maple Set Recreation Area- Improvements at John M. Bethea State Forest, the upper most access point to the river. No update in November
- Reynolds Bridge - connection between northeast Baker County, Florida and southwest Charlton County, Georgia is currently closed. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is in the beginning stages of work towards reconstruction of the bridge. Charlton County Administrator Glenn Hull shared that Charlton County has been asked for a construction easement. Currently, the \$8.5 million dollar rebuild is scheduled for 2028
- National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA)- Presentation scheduled for December 2 Board of Commissioners meeting
 - Includes two public feedback sessions
 - Review of 2, 4, 7, and 11-mile kayak trails within Baker County on river from Moniac to Boy Scout Camp
 - Shoals Park - Considering the idea of a recreation development 7-mile kayak trail

Nassau -

- On Island
 - Brett's Waterway Cafe and Intercoastal - Business closed
 - Boutique Hotel - No update in November
 - Bioethanol plant - Concern with land use plan - \$6.6 million lawsuit filed against City of Fernandina Beach - City has until November to respond - No update in November
 - Beach re-nourishment - No update in November
 - Atlantic Seafood Property - Lessee vacated - building most likely to be demolished - No update in November

- Inland Fernandina Beach - Concern about stormwater management. New areas are flooding from lighter rain events - No update in November
- Waterfront Park - No movement on construction. Work began in the spring, but stopped during the summer - No update in November
- New Fishing Pier - Possible seawall and parking construction - in front of Alachua - No update in November
- Mainland
 - Townhouse Development - No update in November
 - Conservation Land Acquisition Management (CLAM) program - Board of County Commissioners is working to purchase land for conservation
 - Old St. Marys River Ranch - 617 acres - tentative
 - Callie Kay's on the River - 74 acres - tentative
 - Atlantic to Okefenokee (A2O) - Board of County Commissioners is working to purchase land for conservation
 - Crandall Road - 12 acres - A2O - anticipated for BOCC action in November

Camden -

- Blue Bridge - No update in November
- 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. It may be possible to obtain storm water plans - Anticipated to open around February/early 2026 - No update in November
- Temple Creek - Boardwalk complete - Interpretive Trail is under construction
- Sheffield Island Development - A development has been proposed for the Sheffield Island area in Camden County. The developers are asking for the area to be annexed into the City of Kingsland. Both the city and county have issued statements about the proposed development. City of Kingsland Planning Commission tabled action - No update in November

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp - Waiting on grant funding to proceed, but county did not apply in most recent grant cycle
- Raydient - The Refuge, featuring 12 lots ranging from +/-20 to +/-45 acres along the St. Marys River, has been advertised as "coming soon" from Raydient Rural. This is near the Atlantic White Sturgeon protection area - No update for November
- Due to a procedural error in required public notification, the Charlton County Board of Commissioners was forced to remove the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) renewal from the November 4 ballot. The next opportunity to vote on SPLOST is in May 2026. The county estimates there will be a loss of \$1.2 million in revenue and says they will be required to move money from elective budget items, such as parks and recreation, to core items, such as public safety

Water Quality

- NPDES - No new or renewed permits in Camden County or Charlton County
- Spanish Creek 319 - No report for November
- 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 - No update for November

- E&S spreadsheet
 - Florida requires a 25' buffer for wetlands, but not for surface waters. The committee continues to work towards a 25' construction buffer for Florida
 - Nassau County has included a 50' buffer in the Visioning Exercise of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update
 - Georgia does not have Nitrogen and Phosphorus (N/P) regulations; No update for November
 - Tim Hiers, of White Oak Conservation, is still working on Best Management Practices (BMP) for golf courses; No update for November
 - Educational flyer for landscapers - No update for November
 - Shared with Ace Hardware for distribution in Charlton County
 - Shared with Ace Hardware and Hometown Feed & Seed for distribution in Camden County
- FL TMDL Planning - No update in November
- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting - No update in November
- Folkston Wastewater Treatment Plant - No update in November - Pender Lloyd, Folkston City Manager, reported that construction has begun on the new system, which will increase capacity to 1.25 MGD. The project is scheduled for completion in December 2026, with some final installations potentially extending into the first two quarters of 2027. The current facility has a capacity of 1.0 MGD.
 - The GEO Group is in the process of converting the D. Ray James prison facility to expand ICE capacity, bringing the total population to approximately 2,800–3,000 individuals. When both the prison and ICE facility were previously at capacity (3,000), the city's treatment facility was processing 0.75 MGD.

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Vulnerability study still in progress - County waiting on report - No update in November
 - 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 November
 - Camden County - Resiliency Operations Center open and operating - County has begun work on stormwater grant, but waiting on progress update
 - 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
 - Charlton County has hired their first E&S employee
 - No update for November, but work in-progress by Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) and St. Marys Riverkeeper may help with Vulnerability Assessment
- City Stormwater rehab -
 - Folkston Stormwater improvements - No update for November
 - Macclenny - No update for November
 - Updates needed for Hilliard, Kingsland, and St. Marys

- Georgia Water Councils - Meetings took place in September - they are in progress for changing the number of actual members of the councils

Regulatory/Comp Plans

- Nassau County No Wake Zone - Applications are almost complete; no update for November
- Baker County Comprehensive Plan - Consultant still working on the plan - County did not receive grant funding for assistance in most recent grant cycle
- Nassau County Comprehensive Plan - Currently in progress - community visioning sessions have taken place throughout 2025
- Fishing Tournament/ Want Waste Regulations FL - Following review of current season tournaments, there is not a need for the Committee to take action at this time. Committee can reevaluate in the future as needed
- Resiliency Plans - The Committee submitted comments on the Section 309 Assessment and 2026–2030 Strategy. The Coastal Resources Division (CRD) acknowledged receipt of the letter and reported that they are coordinating with Dewberry regarding Base Level Engineering (BLE) maps, as well as with FEMA concerning their mapping efforts. CRD also indicated they will remain in contact with the St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) and the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NFRC) regarding their respective resiliency plans - No update for November

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
 - Presentation to Nassau County pending
- 2025 Annual Report - Discussion on items included in the draft report

County Projects

- Boating Safety signs at Boat Ramps
 - Signs have been installed at Traders Hill and Camp Pinckney. All Florida agencies have approved the sign design, and the printed signs are ready for distribution. Delivery to Baker County and to the Florida Forest Service is scheduled for this week. Contact with Nassau County is still pending. Camden County has the sign and it is reported to be up

New Business

- No new business for November

Partner Reports

- St. Marys Riverkeeper (SMRK) - No update in November
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) -
 - Feasibility Study - Working on a master list of potential projects. Projects will be ranked to pursue funding
 - Funding available in 2026 for ditching efforts in salt marshes

Committee Member Reports

- No reports for November

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Next Meeting December 1, 2025 Callahan Fire Department