

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes

October 7, 2024

Attendees:

Baker - Commissioner James Croft, Danny Norton (FL Chair)

Nassau - Bill Cochran, Commissioner Alyson McCullough, Keith Tindall

Camden -

Charlton - Russell Barber, Chip Campbell (GA Chair), Merrill Varn (Secretary)

Other - Claire Feazel (SMRMC Admin), Cori Hermle (St. Johns River WMD, by phone)

- The meeting was called to order at 7:22 p.m. A quorum was present.
- The October Agenda was approved.
- Minutes from the September Meeting were approved.
- Treasurer's Report: \$10,959.05

Old Business/Reports

Land Use (including public access)

Baker -

- Boat Ramp - The boat ramp was destroyed by Hurricane Debby. Possible replacement funding available through FEMA, but additional hurricanes have slowed the process.
- Shoals Park- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program planning visit to Baker and Nassau Counties. Program works towards developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors. Site visit scheduled for October 16-18, 2024. Due to storm surge, there is beach renourishment work needed.

Nassau -

- Approximately 130 homes have been approved near Hilliard with another 200 homes in the development process.

Camden -

- Blue Bridge- Currently in arbitration - no update
- Temple Creek- DNR schedule moved back to winter - no update
- Raydient- The City of St. Marys shared an [Informational Session](#) for the [Exit One Development](#).

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp- working towards addition to DNR boat ramp list - no update

Water Quality

- NPDES- no new or renewing permits in St Marys River basin in Charlton or Camden, an application for buffer encroachment permit for a bulkhead replacement in St. Marys, new application forms for buffer encroachment issued.
- Spanish Creek (Clay Branch Project)- 11 tanks pumped so far. Three pumpouts were completed September 18th. One had a clean out valve cap missing and a fragile lid, another had a bottlebrush tree planted over the distribution box and its roots clogging the lines, and a third had a very deep sludge layer, a cracked lid, and only one distribution line could be located. It is possible that the other line is under the carport. The fourth homeowner did not want his tank pumped and the substitute tank could not be located. The project is currently slowed by the temporary reassignment of the DPH inspector due to impacts from Hurricane Helene. The RFP for the septic repair portion of the grant was issued on October 4. The Q5 newsletter was

designed and printed; it is in the process of being distributed. A community outreach event is scheduled for Founders Day on November 9, 2024.

- Septic Think Tank- Currently on hold.
- E&S spreadsheet
 - 25' construction buffer along water bodies (Baker)- no update from Baker County. Cori Hermle said that Florida ERP required an average 25' buffer during construction with a 15' minimum. The buffer could be appealed. The St. Johns River Water Management District's Environmental resource permit (ERP) applicant's handbook (effective June 28, 2024) [details permitting requirements for wetlands and other surface waters](#).
 - N/P-
 - 1) Point of sale fertilizer flyers- Need to talk with stores to see if they would be willing to distribute BMP flyers to customers who purchased fertilizers. Flyers would highlight testing before fertilizing, setting spreader, not applying before heavy rain, shielding the water side, 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. Tentative plan, nothing definite.
 - 3) Use of fertilizers by agriculture and forestry in the two counties. Merrill called GFC they are researching regulations but are currently occupied with storm clean up in central counties. Still waiting for more information from County Extension Agents.
- Folkston WasteWater Treatment Plant- EPD sent 4 questions, Folkston responded, still don't have final okay to issue RFP. Aim to start construction in 2025 and complete 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 - Camden County hosted a meeting for the Georgia Conservancy, in partnership with the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI).
 - Charlton County- Charlton Stormwater Vulnerability and Infrastructure Grant- Rob Brown did a presentation at the October 3 Charlton BOCC meeting. Four sections of grant are vulnerability map layer based on either EPD Base Level Engineering Map or existing soil/elevation layers, stormwater infrastructure map, gap analysis in three areas chosen by stakeholder committee, research policies to protect county from stormwater complaints. Lingering concerns are increased liability for the county if there is a map posted and time commitment required by the roads department to complete the infrastructure layer. There will be a vote at the next meeting. If approved, GMC will write the grant application. The engineering map which should be released by December will make the analysis much more robust and freer to do additional gap analysis. EPD has begun a decade-long process of getting the data incorporated into D-FIRM and FEMA.

- City Stormwater rehab -
 - Folkston Stormwater improvements- no plans to apply for funding until WWTP 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, Commissioner McCullough will speak with Brandy Carvalho in the County Manager’s Office.
- 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- Update from Cori Hermle: SJRWMD working on storm preparations for Hurricane Milton.
- St. Marys Riverkeeper - Georgia EPD proposed reclassifying usage of most of the main stem of the river, from north prong to little St. Marys, as recreation.

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Next Meeting November 4, 2024 Callahan Fire Department.