

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes

September 9, 2024

Attendees:

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

Nassau - Bill Cochran

Camden - Commissioner Ben Casey, John Myers, Jay Smith

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

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

- The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was present.
- The September Agenda was approved.
- Minutes from the July Meeting were approved.
- Treasurer's Report: \$11,091.04

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.
- 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 October 16-18, 2024.

Nassau -

- The Timber to Tides Overlay (T2TDO) is a proposed regulatory document that enforces the principles and priority actions established in the SR200/A1A Corridor Master Plan
 - Open House Community Meeting #2 (in-person)
Tuesday, September 24, 2024, from 4:00-7:00 p.m.
Commission Chambers, 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee, FL 32097

Camden -

- Blue Bridge- Currently in arbitration
- Temple Creek- DNR schedule moved back to winter
- Raydient- Members need to review the permit application Raydient submitted to USACE so that when EPD permit application is made a comment letter can be submitted. The public comment period for USACE permit application has closed. Of concern is whether the retention/detention ponds is adequate, what mitigation is required, and whether the plan complies with Camden County wetland protection code and priorities set forth in their resiliency plan.

Charlton -

- Charlton Camp Pinckney County Park Boat Ramp- working towards addition to DNR boat ramp list

Water Quality

- NPDES permits- no new or renewing permits in St Marys River basin in Charlton or Camden
- Spanish Creek (Clay Branch Project)- Q4 report was filed on August 8. No pumping in July or August because of erratic E coli counts. The mid-August sampling followed a light rain but the numbers at Homeland Park Bridge were extremely high. A second sample the following day

included an additional sample upstream of the bridge; those numbers were lower. One participant called to say her tank was leaking; the sampler checked the nearby ditch and found it contained high levels of bacteria. DPH checked and found the pump was not working, the tank is relatively close to the creek and we have permission from EPD to replace the pump. Another tank was pumped the same day and was fine. The team aims to pump another 8 tanks the week of September 23 weather and sampling permitting.

- Septic Think Tank- Currently on hold.
- E&S spreadsheet
 - 25' construction buffer along waterbodies (Baker)- no update from Baker Co. Cori Hermle said that Florida ERP required an average 25' buffer during construction with a 15' minimum. The buffer could be appealed.
 - N/P- Merrill Varn discussed Florida regulations with Tim Hiers, White Oak Plantation Golf Superintendent, and did some initial research on ways that Charlton and Camden County could work to reduce the runoff of N/P from turf into the river. Both states have BMP manuals for fertilizer use on agricultural and athletic field (including golf courses) use of fertilizer. Florida's manuals are considerably more detailed.

Tim has asked Bryan Unruh, Associate Center Director IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center, to call with prioritized bullet points for point-of-sale education.

- N/P- Spoke with Bryan Unruh two times:
 - Need to determine how many homeowners apply fertilizer and focus on distributing the Florida communication packet to them. He sent a link to the Florida packet that we can adapt for fertilizer point-of-sale education. Five most important points:
 1. Do test before fertilizing,
 2. set spreader,
 3. don't apply before heavy rain,
 4. shield the water side,
 5. sweep pellets off hardscape.
 - Management plans for golf courses. Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has spent several years working with all states to be sure they have a BMP plan and there are templates available for individual courses. He said the fertilizer section of the Georgia Best Management Plan was adequate. Osprey Cove has a plan and has adapted some sections to their needs. Trident has adopted the template but has made no changes. Neither Laurel Cove nor Folkston are GCSAA members. He recommends course superintendents meet to go over best management practices and to help the non-members write plans and members improve theirs
 - Use of fertilizers by agriculture and forestry in the two counties. Merrill will call extension agents and GFC.
- Folkston Waste Water Treatment Plant- out for bids now. Aim to start construction in 2025 and complete by the end of 2027.
- FL TMDL Planning- No update.

- Georgia EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting- no update.

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater
 - Baker County - Assessment is due in December 2024 as part of a regional plan.
 - Camden County - Board of Commissioners received a grant for an unincorporated Camden County Stormwater Plan.
 - Charlton County- Stormwater Vulnerability and Infrastructure Grant- Recent presentation at Charlton BOCC meeting. Four components of the grant would be ground truthed 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, and research policies to protect county from stormwater complaints. Will try to get a vote at the October 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 from the engineering map 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 - Pushing seed money grants. Applications due October 2024.

Regulatory/Comp Plans

- Nassau County No Wake Zone- Progress continues. Language needs to be in resolution format. Continuing to work with local officials
- 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 finalizing Strategic Plan. Additionally, work continues on a Water Quality Feasibility Study with the goal of having projects prepared and ready when funding opportunities are available.
- St. Marys Riverkeeper - None

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Next Meeting October 7, 2024 Callahan Fire Department.