

St. Marys River Management Committee Reports
June 3, 2024

Attendees:

Baker- Ed Barber, James Croft (by phone)

Nassau-

Camden- John Myers

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

Other- Claire Feazel (guest), Emily Floore (by phone)

A quorum was not present; reports were received but no business was conducted.

Land Use

Baker-

- Boat Ramp - The boat ramp was closed June 1 for 45 days to allow for renovations. Emily Floore said she had not noticed any in photos and said she would visit the site later in the week if she had not heard from the county.
- Shoals Park- The county continues to rotate the timber at Shoals Park.

Nassau- no news

Camden-

- Blue Bridge- The county is trying to schedule a meeting with DNR this week to review the site plan for the new facility. They are still waiting for CRD approval.
- Temple Creek- no news
- Raydient- Raydient submitted a site plan to USACE for their approval April 10. The public comment period has closed. There will be additional review by EPD. The committee discussed the site plan diagram and will continue at the next meeting once everyone has had time to review the entire document that was forwarded to us by SMRK.. All committee members are asked to review the document to decide whether the retention pond system was adequately sized and correctly placed to prevent displaced water from reaching the river. Also of interest was what mitigation was required and whether the plan complied with Camden County wetland protection code and priorities set forth in their resiliency plan.

Charlton-

- Camp Pinckney land- no news

Water Quality

NPDES permits- no news

Spanish Creek (Clay Branch 319 Grant)- Merrill Varn reported that the next two (four total) of 25-28 tanks have been pumped. Both systems had problems. One was undersized and built of cement bags; the drainfield had failed. The other was large enough but had a downspout from the roof emptying directly onto the septic tank. The group also discussed possible causes of April sampling numbers which showed high E coli at Homeland Park Bridge. Chip Campbell will look at adding two more sample sites during the summer to see if that will indicate the source. The volunteer event is set for June 22 and a Y1Q4 newsletter including an invitation and list of volunteer activities will be distributed next weekend.

Septic Think Tank- no news

E&S spreadsheet-

- FI 25' Buffer- James Croft will let the committee know what the current setback is for upland building sites on the river.
- GA N/P- Ed Barber reviewed the homeowner and golf course BMPs delineated in the Miami-Dade Ordinance but said that he was uncomfortable using the South Florida program since the weather and soils were so different in our area. Merrill will discuss the program components with Tim Hiers.

Deep Creek Impairment (WBID 2196)- Emily will verify coordinates but said that one of the Deep Creeks was starting to show high E. coli numbers.

FL TMDL Planning- no news. Merrill asked that Ed 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.

Emily reported that the bacterial levels in Escambia Slough/Alligator Creek (Fernandina Beach) are extremely high..

Water Quantity

Stormwater Management/Resiliency-

- Baker- no news
- Nassau- no news
- Camden- opening of the new Resiliency Center was delayed until July.
- Charlton- no news
- City Stormwater rehab- no news

Georgia Water Councils- Chip provided an update on SMRMC activities over the last five years at the May 22 Suwanee-Satilla Water Council meeting. He said it went well and there were lots of questions and discussion. They were pleased that a seed grant project had shown verifiable results.

Regulatory/Comp Plans

Nassau County No Wake Zone- no report

Fishing Tournament/ Wanton Waste Regulations FL- Merrill confirmed that Sam Williams had said that Georgia had no wanton waste regulations for fishing and that he said game regulations were so vague they were not enforceable.

Administrative

New Admin- John introduced Claire Feazel who is considering applying for the admin position. Chip will get in touch with Danny Norton. Merrill said that she and Courtney Balling, the previous admin, were ready to onboard a new admin after the chairs completed interviewing etc.

Annual Report- Nassau Co members need to provide the date that Nassau BOCC accepted the report.

County Projects

Emily said that SMRK was still interested in cooperating on a signage project. Merrill said that Sam Williams would review any summaries of Georgia boating safety regulations to be sure they were correct.

New Business

Partner Reports

SJRWMD- None

Riverkeeper- Emily reported that EPD had received over 77,000 comments on the Twin Pines permit; 400 of those were considered technical comments in need of detailed review.

She also reported on the recent Sturgeon meeting at which she had spoken about the SMRK coordinated St. Marys Project. This year's Kings Bay dredging had killed seven sturgeon all over one meter in length and thus of reproductive age. 93 have been killed since the dredging started in 1955, though records may have only been kept since 1978. She will send committee members the ODESS link with the data. Fin clip material for DNA analysis was collected and frozen until funding sources for the analysis could be identified. DNA analysis will indicate to which populations each fish belongs.

Finally she said SMRK had published a newsletter recently asking recipients to pump septic tanks and clear debris to keep pollutants out of the river during heavy summer rainfall events including hurricanes.

Committee Member Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Discussion concluded at 8:50 pm.

Next Meeting July 8, 2024 Callahan Fire Department.