

St. Marys River Management Committee Minutes
September 11, 2023

Attendees

Baker: Ed Barber, Danny Norton (FL chair), James Croft (by phone)

Camden: Jay Smith, Scott Brazell, Ben Casey, Rick Frey, John Myers

Charlton: Merrill Varn (secretary), Chip Campbell (GA chair)

Nassau: Earl Tindall,

Other: Courtney Balling (admin by phone), Emily Floore (SMRK by phone)

A quorum was present.

Housekeeping

Meeting was called to order at 7:02

September agenda was approved by committee.

August minutes were approved by committee.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer not present, but provided admin with a statement after the fact.

Account balance is \$9303.03

Old Business

Land Use

- Baker County
 - Boat Ramp - Still in the process of matching engineering plans to budget
 - Shoals Park - No update
- Camden County
 - Blue Bridge Access - John Myers has been given a large amount of discovery material to review.
 - Temple Creek Landing - Should get an update from DNR on construction timeline soon
 - Spaceport - No update, will be removed from agenda for now
 - Raydient Development - Rick Frey sent a letter to the St. Marys city manager and asked that the city adopt the three part ordinance recommended by committee rather than address each new development individually and to make City of St Marys Ordinance consistent with statewide County Natural Resources Ordinance
- Charlton County
 - Camp Pinckney - Charlton County Attorney is drawing up sales agreement.
- Nassau County
 - No update

Water Quality

- NPDES Permits – Nothing new or renewing in GA
- Spanish Creek (Clay Branch project) – In mid-August, EPD decided to let Homeland accumulate match even though they did not have final okay from EPA which then came within days. The grant will be back dated to August 1 so city is madly trying to get the first month of work completed in two weeks. Because of the delayed start date, there have been significant personnel changes but city is bringing new employees up to speed and rearranging the schedule to accommodate moves. The first Project Steering

Committee meeting is set for September 19 th and the CAT training is set for October 7. We are also still in the process of getting the contract signed with EPD.

- Septic Think Tank Follow Up (bacteria) – Merrill Varn sent Charlton County Herald information for writing an article about septic tank maintenance and will follow up as soon as Clay Branch 319 is off and running.
- E&S Spreadsheet (sediment) – Spreadsheet is complete. Scott Brazell is now analyzing similarities/differences in county regulations and identifying possible points of disagreement between counties that the committee might address. His initial recommendations were buffer definition and regulations in Florida above and beyond the jurisdictional wetland lines and nutrient (N/P) education or regulation in Georgia to compensate for the slow speed at which the state is moving. The places where Florida regulations are lacking is river bluffs and isolated wetlands. One suggestion was a 25 ft minimum buffer being added to the river corridor ordinances in the Florida counties.
- FL TMDL Planning - No update, Ed Barber thinks regulatory agencies are concentrating in more populated areas of south Florida where there are more impairments.
- GA EPD Comprehensive Nutrient Permitting Strategy (N,P) - Merrill Varn will follow up

Water Quantity

- Four County Stormwater Management
 - Charlton County Map Layer - no report, next report Nov
 - Camden County Resiliency Plan - No update
- Georgia Regional Water Councils
 - Coastal - met Sept 8th . Most of the 3 hrs was spent on water quantity focused on Savannah and surrounding municipalities. Savannah is in the process of converting from use of groundwater (Floridan Aquifer) to surface water (Abercorn Creek, a tributary of the Savannah River). There were presentations by Savannah Water Utility as well as from several smaller municipalities. EPD presented information on the seed grant process. The maximum grant is \$75K including a 40% match of which 10% must be cash. Applicants must attend a pre-application meeting with EPD by October 17, 2023 and applications are due via the online Grants Administration Portal by October 31, 2023. There was also time left for brainstorming on ideas for information gathering topics and outreach meetings over the next three years before the revision process cycles again.
 - Suwannee Satilla- Next meeting scheduled for September 27. Admin will follow up to confirm committee attendees.
- NFRWSP 30 year water plan – St Marys River does not appear to be impacted or appear in the plan as of the latest 5 year revision
- Stormwater Rehab - Merrill needs both county and city updates for annual report.
 - Folkston- no work planned until after completion of new water treatment facility
 - Macclenny - reported last meeting
 - St Marys - still need info
 - Kingsland - still need info
 - Fernandina - still need info

Regulation/Comprehensive Plans

- Nassau County

- No Wake Zone - Merrill confirmed with Florida Fish and Wildlife that all three no wake zones require the state's long form application which means that all questions in the Nassau Citizens Application are relevant and must be answered so that Nassau County can complete the state applications. Short form applications are available for boat ramp no wake zones but the ramp must be in Nassau County. Sam Williams is collecting water depth at proposed buoy locations and is taking additional photos while he is patrolling. EPD sent the list of infractions in Georgia.
- Administrative
 - County appointees/inactive members - In progress

New Business

- GA DNR rule change - Courtney distributed the background information for CRD Notice of Rule Making for the Regulation of Upland Component of a Project, Chapter 391-2-3-.02. The only significant change is that Coastal Marshlands Protection Act permits will now only be required of marina, community dock, and commercial dock projects located over coastal marshlands and not municipal drainage, road, or residential bank stabilization. Public comments are due by September 25, 2023. A motion was approved for Scott Brazell to review the proposed change and draft a comment letter to be submitted to CRD.
- Horsepen Creek 319 - One of the Clean 13 Awards will be presented by Georgia Water Coalition to Camden Co BOCC for their work in the Horsepen Creek area. Emily Floore suggested that Camden apply. Courtney distributed the nomination form that Julie Haigler Camden Co Grants Administrator submitted.

Partner Reports

- SJRWMD – none
- Riverkeeper – Rumor has it that EPD has asked Twin Pines to redo some of their modeling. DNR and EPD both have new directors. House natural resources committee is visiting the swamp November 8 as is the GA Water Coalition. Riverkeeper partnered with Charlton Co for tire amnesty day and removed 85 tires from Stokes Rd bridge (GA side) as well as a dozen or so bags of trash. Two more cleanups scheduled for this Saturday. Several boat tours scheduled for next few weeks. Low Country Boil scheduled for October. There is a lunch and learn next week. Trying to add entire river to paddle trail.
- GA EPD - none

County Reports

- Earthkeepers has an event coming up October 14 for recycling electronic products

Public Comment none

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43

Next meeting is October 2, 2023 7pm at the Callahan Fire Department.