

St. Marys River Management Committee
P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

MINUTES OF MEETING
April 5, 2004

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC) held its regularly scheduled meeting on April 5, 2004, at the Nassau County Building in Callahan, Fla. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed on a separate sheet. A quorum of members was present.

Chairman Chip Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. The minutes from the month of March were reviewed and approved. Winifred Stephenson presented the treasurer's report; the committee's main account has a balance of approximately \$8,261.43. Recent expenditures include a check to Melinda Granlund for funeral flowers in the amount of \$37.45. The committee accepted a motion to reimburse Dean Woehrle for the personal expenses he put toward the St. Marys River Celebration cleanup.

OLD BUSINESS

St. Marys River Cleanup

Dean Woehrle gave a summary of the river cleanup, which was held on Saturday, March 20. According to Woehrle, the 2004 cleanup was the "second best" in cleanup history — 751 volunteers participated and 51,000 pounds of trash were collected. Woehrle listed the sponsors who helped fund and organize the event. He said White Oak Plantation had yet to be paid for their services and the committee would need to write a check. Woehrle said the ticket idea worked well and that White Oak appreciated it because it helped them keep track of how many people they fed.

There was general discussion about the two barges at the base of the St. Marys River that are leaking small pieces of foam into the river. Frustration was expressed that the barges have been there for several years and no agency wants to assist with or help fund the needed cleanup.

Sampling Update

Paula Staples, Watershed Action Volunteer coordinator for Nassau County, provided a water quality sampling update. She said the sampling results were similar to past findings and there have not been any major changes. Staples informed the committee that she also has recent samples from Egans Creek, in Nassau County, that show a surprising drop in PH levels.

Baker County Septic Setbacks

Chairman Campbell informed the committee that an initial meeting about the septic setback issue for Baker County has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 6, with Jason Griffis, Baker County manager.

Bank-To-Bank Strategy

Trish Gramajo provided an update on the status of the bank-to-bank strategy relating to fishing and boating laws. The Northeast Florida Regional Council has agreed to assist the committee with its efforts in this area and has assigned a staff person, Amanda Loach, to work on the subject. Loach has written an abstract of the issues, which Gramajo distributed for review. Loach will come before the committee in the next few months to present her research on the project.

Camden County Boating Safety Course

Donny Rominger provided a summary of the Camden County boating safety course, which was held on March 23 and 25. Rominger said 13 people took the course, including committee member Bob Merck. Of the 13 participants, three or four were youths. Rominger and Merck provided snacks for the class participants on behalf of the St. Marys River Management Committee. Rominger said the participants seemed appreciative and expressed some interest in the committee. Chris Hodge with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources taught the course. Rominger said some of the course time was devoted to the use of personal watercraft.

NEW BUSINESS

Land Acquisition Discussion

Chairman Campbell talked briefly about potential land acquisitions along the St. Marys River. He said there are some large properties “in play” along the river and several timber companies have expressed interest in selling parcels of their land. There is interest in Florida about acquiring some fee-simple property.

Chairman Campbell said there is renewed state interest in partnerships and projects along the river as growth in the area increases. He also mentioned that there is a possibility of getting the committee’s proposed joint resolution signed by the governors of both Florida and Georgia.

St. Marys River Staging Stations

Melinda Granlund, St. Johns River Water Management District, informed the committee that the water management district is considering discontinuing the funding of staging stations along the St. Marys and Nassau Rivers. Granlund said that Kraig McLane is searching for funding and will be able to speak about the issue at an upcoming meeting. Granlund suggested that the committee might want to think about the future possibility of encouraging local governments to provide the funding.

Miscellaneous

Dean Woehrle said he had located a company in Jacksonville that produces colored, printed garbage bags that the committee could purchase and place at boat docks along the river.

George Varn asked about adding committee members. Chairman Campbell said he planned to discuss the issue with the Baker County manager at their upcoming meeting. Chairman Campbell said the committee is in need of one more member for Charlton

County and mentioned that someone from the Black River Development company could be an option. Steve Beck was mentioned as a possibility for Nassau County.

Woehrle said the Nassau County manager has agreed to have the county's grant writer work on finding grant funding for the committee's proposed museum.

Steve Nance said there are some opportunities for the St. Marys River Management Committee to be represented at the upcoming G-8 Summit meeting in Sea Island, Ga.

Varn said it would be interesting to have Georgia Department of Natural Resources give a presentation to the committee on their recent TMDL studies.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 3, at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.