

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**May 3, 2004**

The St. Marys River Management Committee (committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on May 3, 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 not present.

Chairman Chip Campbell called the meeting to order. The minutes from the month of April were reviewed but could not be approved due to lack of a quorum. No treasurer's report was presented.

**OLD BUSINESS**

***Progress Report on Baker County Septic Overlay District***

Chairman Campbell said the septic subcommittee had a generally favorable meeting with the Baker County Commission on April 19, 2004. The Commissioners asked for additional recommended language, which has since been provided. The County is currently reviewing the proposed ordinance. Chairman Campbell told the committee that it might not take as long to get the ordinance implemented for Baker County as it did for Nassau County.

***US Boat Foundation***

Trish Gramajo updated the committee on the status of the clean water grant that was submitted in February of this year. She received notification from the US Boat Foundation (USBF) that the committee was awarded \$2,700 of the \$4,500 that had been requested. USBF liked the proposal idea and the design of the clean water signs and will be sending an information package out shortly. Chairman Campbell suggested that both the St. Johns River Water Management District's graphics department and The Nature Conservancy's office receive a thank you letter indicating how valuable they are to the St. Marys committee.

***Staging Stations***

Kraig McLane, with the St. Johns River Water Management District (District), informed the committee that the District has been performing an evaluation of services they are providing to counties that the counties could either take over or discontinue. The District has been paying for staging stations that determine water levels and water flows. There are a total of three stations along the St. Marys and Nassau rivers, one of which has been collecting data for over 50 years and gives a true historical record for the area. Because the St. Marys River is not part of a comprehensive program at the District, only the historical staging station will remain in the District's budget (October 2004 through September 2005). Therefore, this station is good for one more District budget cycle, but the committee should monitor its funding. McLane suggested that it would be a good idea to send a letter to the District in October thanking them for keeping the station in the

budget. The hydrological systems director at the District will decide if it is to be funded again in the future. The data from the station is important for flood insurance and mapping, and having historical records makes the work more valid.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Baker County Land Donation***

Dean Woehrle updated the committee on a potential land donation from Baker County. The 9-acre property is located in Charlton County, Ga., along the St. Marys River, and is an ideal location for providing boat access to the river. Woehrle said the committee cannot become a landowner for legal reasons, but he suggested the possibility of a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR). The property has front road access at Crossroad 121.

Joe Hopkins commented that GDNR is under pressure to acquire property without having to purchase it. Steve Nance stated that Charlton County would be amenable to a Conservancy/GDNR partnership and that Baker County feels they cannot do anything across the state line in regard to using the site for recreation or maintaining the site. Baker County Manager Jason Griffis has indicated to the committee that the county would like for the property to be used recreationally. Jim Wildes asked if the Boy Scouts could do a program there. It was commented that the site could easily turn into a heavily trashed area, and there were concerns about floodplain location.

Hopkins offered to bring up the donation issue at GDNR's Land Acquisition meeting next week. Hopkins will try to determine their interest and learn what their acquisition process involves. Chairman Campbell informed the committee that he spoke with the Florida office of Greenways and Trails to see if they could extend their liability coverage across state lines; he said they were somewhat dubious about it. Nance offered to bring up the question about the Boy Scouts with the local Scout Master.

### ***Miscellaneous***

There was brief discussion concerning the U.S. 17 bridge. Dean Woehrle raised the issue of the Department of Transportation's safety engineering study regarding the bridge. He commented that \$3.7 million would be spent, but the bridge would still be unsafe. Steve Nance commented that Charlton County has lobbied against the idea that every structure older than 50 years be considered historical, and they have been successful so far.

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