

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**May 2, 2005**

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on May 2, 2005, at the St. Marys Shoals property in Baker County, Fla. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed on a separate sheet. A quorum of members was present.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Chip Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. The minutes from the April 2005 meeting were reviewed and approved. Winifred Stephenson was not present so the treasurer's report was not presented.

The committee members thanked the Baker County Commission for hosting the meeting and for providing dinner.

**St. Marys Shoals**

Barbara Yarbrough introduced Kathy Rhoden, the planning director for Baker County. Yarbrough said the county's goal is to protect the St. Marys Shoals property, which is 1,600 acres. The property is pie-shaped, with two miles of St. Marys riverfront. She said the county needs guidance from state and local agencies that are familiar with land management and development.

Chairman Campbell asked Baker County Commissioner Fred Raulerson how the county acquired the property. Commissioner Raulerson said the land came from a private landowner, with funding assistance from the Florida Land Trust. He said a consultant, Lou Scruggs, helped the county develop a management plan to acquire the property. Commissioner Raulerson said the county is very proud of the acquisition and would appreciate the committee's involvement in the development of the property.

Commissioner Raulerson said he would like to have a boat ramp on the property because currently there is only one public boat ramp in the county. He stated that any proceeds from timber harvesting on the property must be spent on the property, and the county also is talking with an engineer about water/sewer development.

Commissioner Raulerson said the county's parks department is small, and development of the Shoals property could be an opportunity to expand the county's parks and recreation opportunities by adding ball fields and hiking and equestrian trails. There is the possibility for upland development and wetland conservation.

Nels Parsons, of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Division of Land Management, said it is important to learn who owns the land in Georgia across the river from the St. Marys Shoals property. He suggested that acquiring the Georgia side's riverfront would preclude it from being developed and therefore obstructing the view

from the Shoals property and diminishing the environmental benefits of Baker County's protected land.

### **Charlton County Land**

Commissioner Raulerson said that Baker County owns nine acres of land in Charlton County, Ga. He asked if the committee would consider putting in a boat ramp and managing the property. Chairman Campbell explained that the committee is not legally set up for property ownership or management but there had been some discussion about Florida Greenways and Trails acquiring the property. However, Nels Parsons said it would be very unlikely that a Florida agency could acquire land in Georgia.

Commissioner Raulerson asked if there were water management districts in Georgia that could own/manage the property. Kraig McLane, of the St. Johns River Water Management District, said that Georgia does not have water management districts but that it does have regional development centers that might be interested in developing the property. Commissioner Raulerson asked Charlton County Commissioner Mitchell Crawford to consider becoming involved in the issue.

### **Septic Tank Setbacks**

Chairman Campbell discussed the priority strategy and the need to expand the septic setback overlay into Baker County. He stressed consistency among the four counties along the St. Marys River and suggested that the idea be revisited in Charlton and Baker counties. Camden County already has a designated setback, and the committee worked diligently to get Nassau to adopt the setback ordinance. Charlton County simply needs to formalize their setback ordinance.

The motion was made to present the septic overlay to Baker and Charlton county commissions in the near future. Vice Chairman Dean Woehrle agreed to make the presentations. Barbara Yarbrough said the committee needs to contact the Baker county manager to get on the commission agenda.

### ***POSM* Newsletter**

Teresa Monson, of the St. Johns River Water Management District, discussed the committee's recent proposal to expand and/or change the *POSM*. The committee members agreed that more pictures would be nice, but felt that an expansion of the newsletter was not necessary. Monson encouraged the members to be more proactive regarding the newsletter and to submit more photographs and text for articles.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.