

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

MINUTES OF MEETING
October 3, 2005*

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 3, 2005, 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.

Call to Order

Chairman Chip Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. Introductions were made of those in attendance, including the new Nassau County representative, Judson Fulmer. The minutes from the Sept. 12, 2005, meeting were reviewed but could not be approved due to lack of a quorum. Treasurer Winifred Stephenson gave the treasurer's report; the committee's main account has a balance of \$11,685.39

Nassau County - wetlands and buffers discussion

Winifred Stephenson, Nassau County committee member, told the committee about the recent Nassau County Planning & Zoning Board meeting she attended. She explained that the county is proposing to cut the required wetland buffers from 50 feet to 25 feet. She distributed a letter that she had drafted for placement on the Sierra Club Web site, expressing her concerns. There was discussion about what the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) recommended for buffers. Vice chairman Dean Woehrle said SJRWMD has a recommendation regarding isolated wetlands. Stephenson said her research indicates that buffers of 50 to 100 feet are preferable. She said a reduction to 25 feet makes the buffer more susceptible to damage from human activity and soil changes.

Stephenson said it is important to educate the members of the planning and zoning board. There was discussion about the county's recent moratorium on development projects. Committee member Judson Fulmer said he felt maintaining a wetland corridor and the possibility of reducing foot traffic are two issues that may be considered important by a local government.

Melinda Granlund, of the SJRWMD, volunteered to gather information regarding buffers and wetlands from SJRWMD. Granlund suggested referring to the committee's management plan, which discussed the importance of buffers and wetland conservation. Committee member Jim Wildes suggested reminding the county commission that they adopted the committee's septic overlay recommendation last year and that this is a similar and related issue.

Chairman Campbell stressed the point that it is important not to "move backwards" on this issue. He agreed to address the county commission at their next meeting, when they are scheduled to hear the buffer-reduction recommendation.

Stephenson also brought up the proposal to add a new component to the county's Comprehensive Plan—category K—that could possibly increase traffic in mixed-use areas.

Nominating Committee

Dean Woehrle recommended the following members serve on the nominating committee for the selection of officers for 2006: Bob Merck, Dean Woehrle, Jim Wildes and Chip Campbell. Woehrle will organize the group.

Lead Member Designation Discussion

There was discussion about the need for a Baker County lead member. Chairman Campbell explained the necessity of the position. Mike Crawford agreed to serve as the lead member for Baker County.

Future Direction Of Committee

Chairman Campbell suggested tabling this discussion until the next meeting. He urged committee members to review the priority strategies list and be prepared to discuss this topic at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous

Committee member Rick Walsh mentioned that there is a public comment period for the establishment of the Impaired Waters list, including the St. Marys River, by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Trish Gramajo, of The Nature Conservancy, stated that FDEP has incorporated previous comments from committee members (and members of the public) about establishment of criteria for dissolved oxygen and mercury levels.

Dean Woehrle explained that FDEP is now the new owner of the former welcome center property on U.S. 1. The county has asked FDEP if they can sublease the building to the committee. Woehrle said it is important for the committee to make a decision about the property tonight. He said the county is not pleased with the change of ownership and the fact that they are having to pay the yearly lease fee of \$300. Woehrle suggested that the committee pay the \$300 per year lease and continue to seek outside funding for the museum. The members in attendance agreed that the committee should at least pay the lease until they decide what to do with the property. Chairman Campbell expressed concern about the ability to raise enough money to construct the building and manage the property. He said he was willing to pay the lease for a year but said the committee needs to develop a plan about how to raise the money. Granlund said the motion for the committee to pay the lease would be put before the whole committee at the next meeting, in hopes of getting approval from a quorum of members.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

**corrected*