

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

MINUTES OF MEETING
January 9, 2006

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on Jan. 9, 2006, 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairman Dean Woehrle called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. Introductions were made of those in attendance. A new committee member, Russell Barber, has been appointed to the committee from Charlton County. A new representative from Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR), Shea Gaither, was in attendance. Gaither indicated he and Bruce Foisy would be alternating their visits to the committee. The minutes from the December meeting were reviewed and approved. Treasurer Winifred Stephenson presented the treasurer's report; the committee's main account has a balance of \$11,480.81. There was brief discussion about the status of reimbursement for the use of the White Oak Conservation Center's facilities for the holiday party/meeting.

2006 RIVER CLEANUP

The 2006 St. Marys River Cleanup will be on March 18, which is the third Saturday in March. Co-Chairman Woehrle, the lead organizer, said he would like to complete most of the planning within the next few weeks. There will be 27 designated cleanup sites. Teresa Monson, of the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), will assist the committee by drafting and distributing a news release to announce the cleanup. White Oak Conservation Center has agreed to host a picnic following the cleanup. Co-Chairman Woehrle asked if committee members had specific cleanup sites where they wanted to be site captains. He agreed to get in touch with the site captains before the cleanup. Co-Chairman Jim Wildes said he would check on available dates to hold a site captain meeting at White Oak.

WELCOME CENTER PROPERTY

Co-Chairman Woehrle explained to the new members the priority of establishing a museum/clearinghouse for the committee and the possibility of using the former Nassau County welcome center property. He said it was important to study the issue before making a final decision.

Woehrle said the committee is unsure about the status of the Folkston building (Okefenokee Education and Research Center – OERC) and the availability of space there. Committee member Chip Campbell, who is an ex-officio board member for the OERC, responded that OERC is indeed interested in having a SMRMC component and has even suggested that they could house some of the committee's archival documents at its building. Co-Chairman Woehrle asked for several members to volunteer to serve on a subcommittee to research the issue, including those who might have any grant writing experience. Co-Chairman Wildes affirmed that the subcommittee needed to research which site would be the best location. He also suggested that several staff from White Oak Conservation Center could possibly assist with the grant writing

effort. Charlton County Administrator Steve Nance reminded the committee that the OERC already has a person employed to staff the building and answer phones and questions, etc.

Member Judson Fulmer asked for clarification of the current situation – who owns what property – which Woehrle explained. Fulmer suggested it might make more sense to move forward with the Georgia option. Woehrle responded that since the committee has already committed to paying the Florida lease (\$300) for one year, that the subcommittee should look for funding for the Florida property for a few more months.

Member Winifred Stephenson suggested contacting the Yulee Historic Council for assistance with the project. She said she would follow up with them to see what assistance could be provided.

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Former Chairman Chip Campbell said he is working on the 2005 Annual Report and will have it ready for the February meeting. Committee member Stephenson concurred that she is also working on the annual treasurer's report.

BAKER COUNTY MEMBERSHIP

Melinda Granlund, of the SJRWMD and the committee secretary, mentioned the lack of Baker County member attendance. She informed the committee that member Patricia Lazare had resigned, and she suggested that alternate member Michael Crawford could possibly be promoted to fill the full-member vacancy. Granlund said she didn't have contact information for Crawford, but committee member Mitchell Crawford said Michael is his brother so he would be able to provide the needed information.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chip Campbell discussed a septic tank issue in Charlton County. Steve Nance addressed the issue.

Winifred Stephenson said Nassau County has "gutted" its comprehensive plan to reduce wetland buffers to 25 feet. Campbell said when he had contacted the county attorney about the issue, he was told it would not affect the SMRMC overlay. Stephenson suggested the committee write a letter opposing the change. Woehrle said Trish Gramajo, of The Nature Conservancy, had studied the science behind this issue; he asked Jennifer Hart, also with The Nature Conservancy, to work with Gramajo and write a letter on behalf of the committee. She agreed. Campbell said the letter needs to have a strong statement, underscoring his conversation with the county attorney, saying the committee will not endorse a change to the committee's recommended conservation overlay. He suggested the letter should begin with reference to the committee's work regarding the conservation overlay. Woehrle asked the committee members if they supported this approach, and it was unanimously agreed upon.

Extra copies of the committee's newsletter, *POSM*, and the River Guide were distributed. Teresa Monson encouraged members to take photos at the upcoming cleanup for inclusion in the next edition of the *POSM*.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.