

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

MINUTES OF MEETING
March 5, 2007

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on March 5, 2007, at the Nassau County Public Building, Callahan, Fla. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed on a separate sheet. A quorum of members was present.

Call to Order

Meeting co-chairman Jim Wildes called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. The minutes from the February 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved. Treasurer Winifred Stephenson presented the treasurer's report. There was no recent activity in the management plan account or the committee's main account, which has a balance of \$9,683.77.

Local landowner Earl Keith Tindall was introduced as the nominee for a vacant Nassau County seat on the committee.

St. Marys River Celebration cleanup

Florida Program Chairman Dean Woehrle gave an update on preparations for the March 17 St. Marys River Celebration cleanup.

Nassau County Watershed Action Volunteer (WAV) Program coordinator Paula Staples will set up a WAV booth at White Oak Conservation Center during the post-cleanup picnic to share educational information about water resource protection.

Winifred Stephenson asked to set up a booth to promote the Hometown Democracy movement. Chairman Wildes said he would need to seek permission from White Oak if the initiative was political in nature. When Stephenson also mentioned having an SMRMC presence at the Wild Amelia Nature Festival on May 18-19, the committee suggested that a booth could be set up at the Celebration picnic to promote various events and efforts including the festival and other opportunities for community involvement. Stephenson and Staples were tapped to develop the display.

At the Wild Amelia Nature Festival, Georgia Program Chairman Chip Campbell will be giving a presentation — a “virtual tour of the Okefenokee Swamp.” WAV will have a booth and will be offering nature-based activities for children at the festival's “Kids Niche.” The festival is sponsored by both chambers of commerce in Nassau County. Its Web site is www.wildamelia.com.

Art Contest

Woehrle proposed a new T-shirt design for the Celebration T-shirts, saying that the existing design is outdated. The incentive of getting a T-shirt for volunteering has diminished since the same design has been in use for several years. One suggestion was

to create a new shirt saying “I ♥ the scenic/wild St. Marys River,” “I ♥ our St. Marys River,” or “I ♥ my St. Marys River.” Varn said she did not personally like the heart symbol, and other members agreed. The group agreed to hold an art contest to seek a new design for next year’s T-shirt.

Old Business

Members were appointed to coordinate meetings with the four county commissions in May and June to discuss issues of importance to the SMRMC, such as septic tank setbacks. Appointees were Dean Woehrle and Jim Wildes for Nassau and Camden counties, and Chip Campbell and Merrill Varn for Charlton County. The committee delegated the Baker County visit to members Bryan McDuffie and Barbara Yarborough, though they were not in attendance.

The appointments led to a brief discussion about septic tank setbacks, and Trish Gramajo of The Nature Conservancy suggested that Campbell and Varn should commend Charlton County officials for foresight in dealing with septic tank issues and their conformity with the River Management Plan. Charlton County requires a two-acre minimum parcel and a 100-foot setback for septic systems along the river. Though not in the ordinance, the county Health Department encourages 150-foot setbacks, according to Charlton County Administrator Steve Nance. He said the county also began permitting siting of wells in January 2007.

Stream Buffer Variance

Campbell said he had received a response from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources regarding opposition to a stream buffer variance request. The letter thanked Campbell for his comments, but a variance was issued to allow the landowner to encroach within the 25-foot buffer adjacent to state waters in Charlton County. The variance will allow a bulkhead, dock and landing.

Post Office Box

The committee’s post office box — its formal mailing address — had recently expired. Campbell renewed it.

Low Impact, “Green” Development

Varn praised the recent “green infrastructure” meeting held at Jekyll Island. Members expressed interest in holding a low-impact development seminar in Nassau County, similar to one held recently in St. Johns County, but perhaps without offering continuing education credits in an effort to hold down the cost to participants.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.