

St. Marys River Management Committee

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 5, 2010

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on April 5, 2010, at the Nassau County Building in Callahan, Florida. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed on a separate sheet. A quorum of members was not present.

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Dean Woehrle called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m. Introductions were made of those present. Due to the lack of a committee quorum, the agenda and previous meeting minutes (March 2010) could not be officially approved. The Treasurer was not present, so no Treasurer's Report was given.

St. Marys River Cleanup Update

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, provided an update on the cleanup event. He said over 1,000 volunteers participated and approximately 68,000 pounds of trash were collected. Tipping fees were paid for by Keep Nassau Beautiful. Woehrle distributed paperwork to the committee members detailing a financial breakdown of the costs of the cleanup, as well as donations received. White Oak Plantation submitted a bill to the committee for feeding 300 people (\$1500; \$5 per person), even though more than 500 people attended the luncheon. A suggestion was made to hold future cleanup luncheons/picnics at more than one venue so that more people could attend. Kevin Shell, Baker County, told the members that the St. Marys Shoals property would be a good location for a cleanup event. Chip Campbell made the suggestion that a Cleanup Subcommittee needs to be formed to help manage future cleanups as the event is growing larger each year. There was discussion about issues that need to be addressed by the Cleanup Subcommittee, including participation/representation by each county, as well as partnering with 501-C3 entities which could help with fundraising.

Woehrle indicated that the sturgeon "touch tank" and information booth was very popular at the White Oak Plantation luncheon. Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said two sturgeon had recently been caught in the St. Marys River.

Technical Water Quality Meeting Update

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said that a full Water Quality Meeting report would be given at the May meeting of the SMRMC.

Varn distributed copies of a letter she had drafted on the committee's behalf to EPA representative Bill Melville, petitioning Mr. Melville and his peers to provide research time on the underlying causes of the dissolved oxygen sag present in the lower St. Marys River. Varn agreed to mail the letter to meet Mr. Melville's stated 4/15/2010 deadline.

Charlton County Comprehensive Plan Update

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, informed the committee that Charlton County accepted and incorporated the committee's comments into the county's latest draft (and most likely final version) of the county's comprehensive plan.

Septic Think Tank / 319 Grant Proposal Update

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, informed the committee that Trish Gramajo-St. John, with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), had attended a recent Nassau County Board of County Commission meeting to request the county's assistance with the Section 319 Grant application. The Nassau Commissioners apparently said they could not be the grant applicant and expressed concern that no one else was present to speak in favor of the grant. Varn informed the committee that, in the absence of a Florida county to act as a Section 319 applicant, the University of Georgia would be the applicant for the Section 319 monies for Florida.

2009 Annual Report

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, drafted the committee's 2009 Annual Report and distributed copies to the committee members for review. It was suggested that, once approved, the report should be presented to each county commission.

SMRMC Budget

Ken Hase, Camden County, distributed copies of a budget spreadsheet which he had prepared for the committee. The spreadsheet detailed expenditures and revenues, and it indicated a current deficit. There was discussion about additional expenditures that may need to be included. There was discussion about the need for more fundraising to help offset expenditures. Hase agreed to make adjustments to the draft document and present the updated budget at the May meeting.

Committee Member Updates

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said she attended a recent Coastal Georgia Regional Water Council meeting at which it was clear that the St. Marys River is a strong candidate for use as an alternative water supply source.

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, said the committee needs to inform the St. Johns River Water Management District that it does not agree with the District's inclusion of the St. Marys River as an alternative water supply source in its District Water Supply Plan - 2010. A suggestion was made that Campbell draft a letter to the St. Johns River Water Management District, detailing the committee's views regarding the use of the St. Marys River as a water supply source.

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, mentioned that he'd had a discussion with Ms. Alex Kearns of the St. Marys Earthkeepers group, regarding the possibility of attaining the Wild and Scenic River status for the St. Marys River. There was general discussion about whether such status is positive or negative, and of which groups/entities would support it. Chip Campbell, Charlton County, said that such a designation would prevent the river from being considered as a water supply source.

Miscellaneous

Visitor Bill Bruce said there are three abandoned boats at Lang's Marina and he asked the committee members if there was anything that could be done to remove them. The suggestion was made to contact the local city council and county commission. Bruce Foisy, Georgia

Environmental Protection Division, told Mr. Bruce to contact him and that maybe he could provide some assistance.

Melinda Granlund, administrative assistant, informed the committee that Florida Governor Crist had reappointed Leonard Wood (of Nassau County) to the St. Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board. Wood was also appointed as Chairman of the board.

Granlund also informed the committee that the Baker County High School FFA team would be giving a presentation to the committee at the May meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.