

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

MINUTES OF MEETING
May 3, 2010

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

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Dean Woehrle called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Introductions were made of those present. The meeting agenda was reviewed and amended to include a discussion of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's letter to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding proposed numeric nutrient criteria, as well as a discussion about the date of the committee's July meeting. The minutes from previous meetings (March and April, 2010) were reviewed and approved. The Treasurer's Report was presented and approved. The report indicated \$8,177.14 in the operating account and \$526.50 in the management account. Ken Hase mentioned to Winifred Stephenson that he had discovered a math error while compiling the committee's finances for 2009; they agreed to meet afterward to straighten it out.

Presentation – Baker County FFA

Four students from the Baker County High School Future Farmers of America program presented a "TV-style interview" about wetlands and wetland conservation. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

SMRMC 2009 Annual Report

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, led discussion regarding the draft report. Members reviewed the report and offered clarification on several issues. It was agreed that the committee's budget be included as a part of the report. A motion was made and approved to adopt the report, with accepted changes, as final and to present the finished, final version to each of the county commissions at future Board of County Commission meetings. Ken Hase agreed to present the report to Camden County. Dean Woehrle agreed to present the report to Nassau County. Kevin Shell agreed to present the report to Baker County, and Merrill Varn and Chip Campbell agreed to present the report to Charlton County.

UF/Water Quality Technical Meeting Overview and Next Steps

Three members of the University of Florida Conservation Clinic (Hollie Hall, Susanna Blair, and Anna Cathey) addressed the committee and provided an overview of the March 1 Water Quality Technical Meeting. Hall distributed copies of the official minutes from the March 1 meeting. Blair reviewed six recommendations that the Conservation Clinic felt the committee should adopt to help promote the interests of the committee. (The recommendation letter is included as Attachment A.)

The recommendations included appointing various volunteers from within the committee to assume certain roles in an effort to help the continual promotion of the committee's interests, including the promotion of more inter-agency communication and more efficient water quality

monitoring/data collection. Jeremy Flood, Nassau County, agreed to assume the role of “Interagency Liaison” (recommendation #1). Ken Hase, Camden County, agreed to assume the role of “Science Coordinator” (recommendation #2). Kevin Shell, Baker County, agreed to assume the role of “Volunteer Coordinator” (recommendation #3). Merrill Varn and Chip Campbell (both from Charlton County) agreed to share the roles of “Impaired Water Specialists,” “DO Sag Specialists,” and “GA Water Planning Liaison” (recommendations 4, 5 and 6).

Varn thanked the members from the Conservation Clinic and asked for them to attend another committee meeting in several months to check on the committee’s progress.

Septic Think Tank / 319 Grant Proposal Update

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, informed the committee that Georgia still had not made a final determination regarding the awarding of its 319 grant funding but should by the end of May. Laurie Fowler, with the University of Georgia, is applying for Florida 319 funding as well. The application is due by the end of May. The application is identical to the Georgia request except that failed tank replacement has been replaced with public education and helping counties obtain funding for replacement. Fowler has asked the SMRMC to send the same letter of support that it sent with the Georgia grant, including the same in-kind contribution (\$5K) as was made for the Georgia application. Varn explained that the same in-kind contribution as offered for Georgia can be used for Florida (instead of doubling the amount of the committee’s contribution). A motion was made and approved for the committee to send a letter to Florida to begin the application process.

Coastal GA Regional Water Council meeting update

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said there was no update to provide as the Council had not met since the SMRMC’s last meeting.

Budget Discussion

Ken Hase, Camden County, distributed copies of a budget spreadsheet which he had created, detailing the committee’s finances. The committee moved to accept the budget spreadsheet as presented.

FDEP Letter, Re: Proposed Numeric Nutrient Criteria

Kevin Shell, Baker County, reviewed a recent letter sent from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding EPA’s proposed nutrient criteria. He asked that the committee contact EPA and let them know that committee supported the FDEP’s comments. Chip Campbell, Charlton County, clarified that the committee had already drafted and mailed a letter to the EPA addressing the issue and expressing concerns about possible interstate impacts.

Creation of Cleanup Subcommittee

The committee agreed to postpone discussion of this item until the next meeting.

Sturgeon Information

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, said he did not have any further information to share from what he had presented at the April meeting.

Committee Member Reports

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, distributed copies of a letter which he had drafted to be presented to the Northeast Florida alternative water supply subgroup (at their meeting on May 6). The draft letter addressed the issue of placing the St. Marys River on a future proposed alternative water supply list. Several technical and grammatical changes were made to the letter, as well as adding a request for the establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels for the river. Merrill Varn suggested also sending a copy of the letter to the Georgia water councils. The committee agreed that the amended letter could be presented at the May 6 meeting.

Miscellaneous

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, made a motion, which was approved, to have the committee reimburse Dean Woehrle for \$569.19 for personal expenses accrued during the recent river cleanup event.

Winifred Stephenson, Nassau County, made a motion, which was approved, to pay White Oak Plantation \$1,500 for hosting the committee's Christmas/end-of-the-year event.

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, asked that the end-of-the-year event be included as a topic on the next agenda.

Due to conflicts with the July Fourth holiday schedule, committee members agreed to move the July meeting to the last week in June (June 28).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

St. Marys River Water Quality Technical Meeting Recommendations May 3, 2010

Overview

On March 1, 2010 the St. Marys River Water Management Committee organized a group of water quality experts representing agency, academic, and non-governmental institutions with specific expertise in water quality monitoring within the Basin. The meeting was convened to discuss the potential for additional transboundary Georgia & Florida and inter-agency coordination to facilitate a more robust program of water quality monitoring for long-term adaptive management. Nineteen individuals representing eight different agencies and institutions attended the meeting, including the: St Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC), Georgia Department of Natural Resources- Environmental Protection Division (DNR-EPD), Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Coastal Resources Division (EPD-CRD) Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), University of Georgia and University of Florida. This document is a summary of the meeting including recommendations for moving forward, a list of those in attendance and meeting minutes. The meeting was facilitated by the University of Florida Conservation Clinic. Although no effort to find formal consensus was sought, based upon the Clinic team's review of the meeting notes the following observations, conclusions and recommendations appeared to emerge from the meeting. Responsibility for these and for errors in content and interpretation remain with the authors.

Recommendations

In an effort to institutionalize the recommendations stemming from the St. Marys River Water Quality Technical Meeting we suggest that the members of the St. Marys River Management Committee assume the following duties:

1. **Interagency Liaison:** Call and get water quality monitoring updates from the agencies every six months. Ask them to provide maps with sampling locations, with summaries of the information gathered, their opinion of the state of the river and the monitoring program, and coordination with other agencies. Contacts include:
 - a. Lee Banks at FDEP: 904-807-3300 x3227 lee.banks@dep.state.fl.us
 - b. Cliff Lewis at GEPD: 229-391-2410 cliff.lewis@dnr.state.ga.us
 - c. Steve Winkler at SJWMD: 386-329-4543 swinkler@sjwmd.com
2. **Science Coordinator:** Review the data gathered by the Interagency Coordinator. Look for red flags, gaps in data, and areas of overlap. Identify issues that need to be addressed by the agencies. Add this information to the annual report and deliver the report to all of the agencies listed below.
 - a. Mary Jo Bragan at US EPA FL Watershed Coordinator, Region 4: 404-562-9275 bragan.maryjo@epa.gov
 - b. Franklin Baker at US EPA FL Watershed Coordinator, Region 4: 404-562-9757 baker.frank@epa.gov
 - c. Lee Banks at FDEP: 904-807-3300 x3227 lee.banks@dep.state.fl.us
 - d. Cliff Lewis GEPD: 229-391-2410 cliff.lewis@dnr.state.ga.us
 - e. Steve Winkler at SJWMD: 386-329-4543 swinkler@sjwmd.com

ATTACHMENT A

- f. Dominic Guadagnoli at GADNR Coastal Recourses Division: 912-264-7218
dom.gudaganoli@dnr.state.ga.us
 - g. County officials
3. **Volunteer Coordinator:** Coordinate volunteers with agencies and existing monitoring efforts. This role will involve bringing together the appropriate volunteer programs in both states. The first step should be to identify leaders for the Adopt-A-Stream monitoring program and the Watershed Action Volunteers (in FL) to initiate a coordinated transboundary volunteer effort. Mary Jo Bragan at US EPA FL Watershed Coordinator, Region 4 (404-562-9275) bragan.maryjo@epa.gov mentioned she would help. Volunteer monitoring can be used to red flag areas for additional monitoring.
- a. WAV: <http://www.floridaswater.com/wav/> includes a database of water quality data collected by WAV volunteers. (There is an existing volunteer coordinator for Nassau County.)
 - b. Adopt-A-Stream: www.adopt-a-stream.org
 - c. Identify any other programs including bringing volunteering to local schools and youth organizations.
4. **Impaired Waters Specialist:** Stay updated on the TMDL process and current list of impaired waters in GA and FL. This may involve keeping an up-to-date map of the impaired waters in both states, attending meetings, and checking the GA and FL websites monthly to look for updates.
- FL: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/watersheds/assessment/index.htm>
GA: www.georgiawaterplanning.org
5. **DO Sag specialist:** Follow up on dissolved oxygen (DO) sag in the mouth of the river. Be informed of current research regarding the causes of the sag and follow through with the DO sediment oxygen demand study that is being implemented.
6. **GA Water Planning Liaison:** Attend Georgia's Water Planning Council monthly meetings to stay up to date regarding ongoing activities.
- a. Suwannee-Satilla Region: www.suwanneeatilla.org
 - b. Coastal Georgia Region: www.coastalgeorgiacouncil.org