

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**January 10, 2011**

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on January 10, 2011, at the Nassau County Building in Callahan, Florida. Committee members and visitors in attendance are listed at the end of the minutes. A quorum of members was present.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman Dean Woehrle at 7:16 p.m. Minutes from the previous month's meeting (December 2010) were reviewed and approved. Due to the resignation of the committee's Treasurer, a formal treasurer's report was not presented.

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, informed the committee that member Ken Hase (Camden County, and committee Treasurer) had resigned his position due to accepting a job offer in another location. Merrill Varn, Charlton County, mentioned that a local citizen, Philip Jones, had contacted Roger Weaver (with the Georgia Water Planning Council) with interest in joining the Committee to represent Camden County. Melinda Granlund, administrative assistant, agreed to follow up with the Camden County administrator.

**Septic Think Tank/Horsepen Creek Grant**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, distributed a summary of a Section 319 grant that Laurie Fowler, with the Georgia River Basin Center, was submitting. Fowler requested cooperation from the committee and a letter of support. Fowler indicated she would like the committee to organize, host and run eight meetings and one field day (a minimum of 400 hours of volunteer time). The members of the Water Quality Subcommittee had previously agreed to provide 390 of the requested 400 volunteer hours. Varn suggested that the Land Use Subcommittee would be the most appropriate group to organize the three policy meetings. Chip Campbell, Charlton County, made a motion to approve the letter of support, including the promise of the requested volunteer time.

Varn also mentioned that possible future actions of the Florida Legislature might have some impact on the recently approved septic tank inspection regulations. There was some indication that one proposal would allow counties to opt in or out, or even partially in, for the program. Varn suggested that if the possibility arose, the committee may wish to encourage Baker and Nassau counties to include the St. Marys River overlay areas in the inspection program. Winifred Stephenson, Nassau County, suggested that the health departments should be encouraged to promote the benefits of the ordinance. Mike Griffis, Baker County, said there would probably be a legislative push to overhaul or even repeal the law that requires systems to be inspected every five years.

Varn said that the Septic Think Tank had stopped their work temporarily in light of the regulatory uncertainty but asked for guidance as to what the committee would like for the Think Tank to pursue. The decision to offer formal direction was tabled until the next meeting.

### **St. Marys River Fisheries Restoration Project update**

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, informed the committee that the fisheries group held a meeting in Palatka in December that focused on sonar discussion/education. Campbell informed the committee that the St. Marys River has become a sub-unit of the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), which will provide more opportunities for grant applications in the future.

Campbell also informed the committee that during recent river samplings, more than 20 Atlantic White Sturgeon were caught in King's Bay and nine were found further up the river. One Short-Nose Sturgeon was also found; it is a federally listed endangered species.

### **Boat Wake (State/Federal Regulations Subcommittee)**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, asked for guidance for UF law student Austin Moretz, regarding his boat wake regulation research. Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, agreed to email Moretz. Karen Chisholm, Camden County, suggested having law enforcement officers from Florida and Georgia attend a future meeting to explain how they interpret/enforce existing boat wake regulations.

### **Fecal Coliform presentation**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, gave a presentation to the committee on fecal coliform, which is a bacterial count that indicates the presence of disease-causing organisms in water. The organisms can come from both point-source and non-point source discharge. Varn explained the various testing methods for identifying fecal coliform.

### **Letter of Support for City of St. Marys**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, explained that the city manager of St. Marys had contacted her, asking for the committee to write a letter in support of the city's efforts to improve a current city dock by adding railings and new deck surface. The committee agreed to do so.

### **Water Quality Subcommittee update**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, informed the committee that the second annual Water Quality Technical meeting will be held on Thursday, March 3. She said the subcommittee is still in the process of seeking summary analyses from the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. Varn is seeking a list of water quality parameters that the SMRMC should follow for the river.

### **Land Use Subcommittee update**

Jeremy Flood, Nassau County, informed the committee that the subcommittee will need an additional member, due to the resignation of Ken Hase.

### **River Cleanup Event update**

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, informed the committee that the annual River Cleanup will be held on March 19. He said there will likely be a celebration, following the cleanup, at Gilman Park in St. Marys, GA. He is waiting on final confirmation from the Keep Nassau Beautiful staff. There is the possibility that a celebration event could also be held in Fernandina Beach, FL, but nothing official has been planned yet.

**Review of draft 2011 Annual Report**

The committee members reviewed the draft annual report, which was written by Merrill Varn. Several edits were suggested. Chip Campbell, Charlton County, made a motion to accept the edited version of the report. Varn agreed to make the changes and send the final version to the committee's administrative assistant for distribution.

**Committee Member Reports/Comments**

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, suggested appointing Jeremy Flood, Nassau County, to assume the role of Treasurer, following the resignation of Ken Hase. Flood agreed to assume the role, and a motion was made and seconded to appoint Flood to the position.

**Public Comment**

Randy Rice, representing the Sustainable Nassau group, informed the committee about an upcoming meeting to discuss the "Region First 2060 Plan" at the FSJC Betty Cook Center at 7 p.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

# **St. Marys River Management Committee Attendance Log – January 10, 2011**

## **Baker County Members**

Mike Griffis  
Kevin Shell

## **Nassau County Members**

Jeremy Flood  
Winifred Stephenson  
Keith Tindall  
Dean Woehrle

## **Camden County Members**

Karen Chisholm  
Jim Wildes

## **Charlton County Members**

Chip Campbell  
Merrill Varn

## **Non-voting Members**

Bruce Foisy

## **Visitors**

Randy Rice

## **Administrative Assistant**

Melinda Granlund