

## **St. Marys River Management Committee**

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**February 7, 2011**

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on February 7, 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 7:10 p.m. Members of the committee introduced themselves. Minutes from the previous month's meeting (January 2011) were reviewed and approved. Due to transition in the position of Treasurer, Jeremy Flood said that he did not have an official treasurer's report to present. Flood did ask for assistance in formulating a budget for 2011, and Melinda Granlund agreed to forward to him a copy of the budget that Ken Hase had prepared in 2010.

#### **Septic Think Tank Group update/guidance**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, informed the committee that the paperwork for the Section 319 grant had been submitted.

Varn asked for guidance for the Septic Think Tank group: whether they should continue meeting or wait for the Florida Legislature to possibly make changes to the current law requiring septic system inspections every five years. Varn suggested, and the committee agreed, that the Think Tank group should be encouraged to continue discussing options to remedy the widespread failing septic system problems in spite of the regulatory uncertainty. There was discussion about the possibility of a St. Marys Overlay with separate inspection requirements.

#### **Boat Wake Regulation Study**

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, said he had emailed UF law student Austin Moretz, regarding his boat wake regulation research, and asked him to specifically focus on river traffic during flood stage. Woehrle said he wants to find a method for controlling the river traffic. Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said it might be helpful to have Moretz talk with both Florida and Georgia law enforcement officials to get a realistic take on how they enforce current regulations.

#### **Annual Report – presentations to counties**

The following members volunteered to present copies of the 2010 Annual Report to their respective county commission: Dean Woehrle to Nassau County, Chip Campbell to Charlton County, Karen Chisholm and Philip Jones to Camden County, and Greg Sheppard to Baker County.

#### **Dissolved Oxygen Presentation**

Winifred Stephenson, Nassau County, gave a presentation to the committee on dissolved oxygen. She explained that the health of a river is traditionally measured by the amount of dissolved oxygen (D.O.) in the water, but that because the St. Marys River is a dark-water river with much tannic acid, the D.O. is not an accurate indicator. Stephenson also said the testing procedure to

determine the amount of D.O. can be complicated because the test has to be administered in a specific way that does not disturb the water. Stephenson said there is a “u” in the river between King’s Ferry and Flea Hill that historically has very low D.O. levels. She said this area may actually be a dead area, but that has not yet been confirmed.

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, discussed how D.O. levels can impact aquatic life. Merrill Varn, Charlton County, reminded the committee that the Environmental Protection Agency is creating a model to study the D.O. levels in the St. Marys River, and that the Regional Water Planning Council has a watershed improvement plan to look at river impairments, including D.O.

#### **Land Use Subcommittee update**

Greg Sheppard, Baker County, gave an update to the full committee of what the Land Use and Planning Subcommittee had discussed earlier in the evening. Sheppard said the subcommittee’s main goal will be to review land use plans and to reach out to the counties to remind them of the assistance the committee can provide. Sheppard said the group is trying to establish guidelines for the subcommittee.

#### **Water Quality Subcommittee update**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, provided the full committee with additional information about the upcoming second annual Water Quality Technical meeting, which will be held on Thursday, March 3. The meeting will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Charlton County Office building. Varn said they are expecting about 20 attendees, and she said the group would like to provide lunch to the attendees. A motion was made, and approved, for the subcommittee to spend \$200 on lunches for the meeting.

Varn also said the subcommittee has developed seven parameters to use to analyze the data they have received from the various state agencies.

#### **River Cleanup Event update**

Karen Chisholm, Camden County, will be meeting with city officials from St. Marys to discuss holding the river cleanup celebration at the Gilman Park (with no fees for the committee to pay). The subcommittee will be looking for food donations, or possibly food vendors who would be willing to provide food. Chisholm said it will be very important to have as many members of the SMRMC as possible to assist with the cleanup celebration event: helping with set-up, clean-up and serving food. She reminded members that White Oak Plantation has provided such services in the past, but this time it will be up to the committee.

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, said he has ordered 1,000 tee shirts to be handed out the day of the cleanup.

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, suggested that it might be beneficial to have cleanup celebrations in all four counties in the future, rather than in just one location. There was discussion about how to fund and organize multiple events. Woehrle said it is challenging to do multiple events without dedicated funding.

Greg Sheppard, Baker County, suggested contacting the Boy Scouts for assistance. Woehrle asked if anyone had any contacts with the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, and Philip Jones, Camden County, said he might be able to speak with someone there about participating.

**Committee Member Reports/Comments**

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, asked if any members from Camden County would consider joining the Water Quality Subcommittee. There was discussion about adding new member Jay Lassiter to the subcommittee.

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, said the St. Marys River Fisheries Restoration group will be having an all-day meeting at Jacksonville University on February 15.

Jeremy Flood, Nassau County, asked Dean Woehrle to provide him with a budget for the river cleanup. He also asked the other committee members to let him know of any other expenses that the committee might incur during 2011.

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, said the East Boulogne dam is almost finished and encouraged members to visit and see it.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

**St. Marys River Management Committee  
Attendance Log – February 7, 2011**

**Baker County Members**

Gordon Crews, Commissioner  
Mike Griffis  
Kevin Shell  
Greg Sheppard

**Nassau County Members**

Jeremy Flood  
Winifred Stephenson  
Keith Tindall  
Dean Woehrl

**Camden County Members**

Karen Chisholm  
Philip Jones

**Charlton County Members**

Russell Barber  
Chip Campbell  
Merrill Varn

**Non-voting Members**

Bruce Foisy

**Visitors**

Steve Nance  
Alice Vick

**Administrative Assistant**

Melinda Granlund