

St. Marys River Management Committee

P.O. Box 251 Folkston, Georgia 31537

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 2, 2011

The St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC or committee) held its regularly scheduled meeting on May 2, 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 Chip Campbell at 7:13 p.m. Committee members introduced themselves. The draft agenda was reviewed and amended to add discussion of a JEA Consumptive Use Permit application. Minutes from March and April meetings were reviewed and approved. The Treasurer's Report was presented by Jeremy Flood; the operating budget has a balance of \$6333.86. Flood noted that the April bank statements had not been received as of the date of the committee's May meeting. Flood distributed a budget forecast spreadsheet for 2011; the members reviewed and approved it. There was discussion about how to handle a predicted deficit and whether the committee should obtain its own federal tax identification number.

Legislative Update Regarding Septic Tank Inspection Requirements

Mike Griffis, Baker County, provided a brief update regarding several legislative bills that could impact current septic tank inspection requirements. House Bill 13 (Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems) would, in effect, repeal the statutes that require the Florida Department of Health to create and administer a statewide septic tank evaluation program. The house bill would also terminate a grant program for repairs of onsite sewage treatment disposal systems. HB 13 was passed by the House and is now moving through the Senate. There are several similar Senate bills that also address the issue of septic tank inspection and evaluation, but as of May 2, none of the Senate bills had been passed by the full Senate.

Miocene Holdings Permit Application

The committee discussed the current Miocene Holdings surface water withdrawal permit (and possible future permits) before the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD). Mitchell Crawford, Charlton County, informed the committee that he had spoken with a representative of the Miocene Holdings company regarding the permit application. Merrill Varn and Steve Nance (both from Charlton County) confirmed that the official public comment period for the permit application had not yet been established and therefore there was time for the committee, as well the counties and other individuals, to send in letters of concern.

Steven Nance mentioned that he had questioned whether the company could be charged a severance or royalty tax for removing the tannins, but was told that was not possible because the river is considered a public water body.

After discussion of how the committee should proceed, the committee voted to authorize the co-chair to draft a letter, which could be shared with the counties as well as the GEPD, which would detail all of the committee's concerns. Specific concerns to be addressed are: volume of water removed from the river, the extraction of tannins, the ph level of the water being returned to the river, interstate impacts, water quality parameters, and overall impact on bioecology.

Expansion of Role of Boat Wake Regulations Subcommittee

The committee agreed, through approval of a motion, to expand the role of, and change the name of, the current Boat Wake Regulations Subcommittee. The new committee will be called the “Water Quantity Subcommittee” and the members to serve on the committee will be Dean Woehrle, Karen Chisholm, Russell Barber, Teresa Crawford, and Greg Sheppard. The role of the committee will be to review water quantity-related issues, such as the Miocene Holdings permit and the JEA consumptive use permit (see below).

JEA Consolidated CUP Overview

Geoff Sample, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), provided an overview of a consumptive use permit that the District’s Governing Board will be considering at their May 10 meeting. JEA, a utilities provider for the city of Jacksonville, FL, is requesting that their various consumptive use permits be consolidated into one large permit that would allow them to use 165 mgd (million gallons per day).

Sample said District staff are recommending approval of the permit through 2021 with a cap at 142 mgd and various other conditions to be met, including an increase in the reuse of reclaimed water. There was discussion about the expenses involved in creating alternative water supplies.

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, expressed concern about the lack of surface water quantity monitoring in the northern and eastern portions of the permit area that could show impacts to the St. Marys River. A motion was made, and approved, for Varn to draft a letter to the SJRWMD expressing concern on behalf of the committee about the potential impact the permit could have on surficial waters.

Subcommittee Updates

Water Quality

Merrill Varn, Charlton County, said the Septic Think Tank group will be meeting on May 31 to review and update their spreadsheet. She also informed that committee that they should hear about potential approval of the Section 319 grant later this month. Also, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has completed a preliminary “walking of the WBIDs” (water body identification) for Brandy Branch and the Little St. Marys.

Committee Member Reports

Chip Campbell, Charlton County, displayed some rock specimens that he and Russell Barber, Charlton County, had found in the bed of the St. Marys River. The rocks included what appeared to be greenish quartz pebbles, and fossiliferous limestone.

Geoff Sample, SJRWMD, mentioned that the supply of River Guides is very low. He said the guide will not be reprinted and suggested removing mention of the guide from the committee’s website. The remaining guides will be distributed to local locations.

Dean Woehrle, Nassau County, said the Lake Hampton Dam in East Boulogne has been completed. He said the project turned out well.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

**St. Marys River Management Committee
Attendance Log – May 2, 2011**

Baker County Members

Gordon Crews, Commissioner
Mike Griffis
Kevin Shell

Nassau County Members

Walter Boatright, Commissioner
Jeremy Flood
Winifred Stephenson
Dean Woehrle

Camden County Members

(none)

Charlton County Members

Mitchell Crawford, Commissioner
Russell Barber
Chip Campbell
Teresa Crawford
Merrill Varn

Non-voting Members

Geoff Sample, SJRWMD
Alice Vick (for Bruce Foisy), Georgia EPD

Visitors

Steve Nance

Administrative Assistant

Melinda Granlund