

**REGIONAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTE OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA, INC.**

**Water Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, February 8, 2017, 2pm**

**Camden County Public Library**

Community Room

1410 Highway 40 East, Kingsland, Georgia, 31548

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**Meeting Summary**

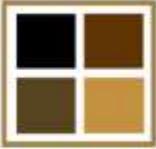
Chair White introduced himself and staff and asked participants to introduce themselves. David Hornsby of the SJRWMD was on the telephone. The Chair noted that public input is always welcome. He reviewed the summary of the February 8 meeting, including the ideas that might be considered as the committee thinks about recommendations. He reminded the group what questions it asked related to today's subject, Data and Compatibility:

- What data – Georgia –Florida
- GA Water Coalition of organizations annual report card
- Clearinghouse on reporting

The committee had a detailed discussion regarding what water quality data exists and who is gathering data in Georgia, in particular. This was often compared to how similar data is collected or stored in Florida. Water quality testing is done by the GDNR Coastal Resources section, by the Sapelo Island NERR, by GEPD, by GA Adopt a Stream and in the past, by the UGA Marine Extension Service. Much data is stored in the EPA database. Results of water quality testing in the St. Mary's were discussed. The biggest issue is fecal coliform, and there are plans to do more testing related to bacteria. Mercury has been found in fish tissue in the northern sections of the St. Mary's and there are some areas with issues related to dissolved oxygen. A grant is currently being sought to address septic tank replacement.

An overview of the St. Mary's watershed was given. The eastern part of the Okefenokee Swamp is the source for the St. Mary's, while the western part is the source for the Suwannee. The river forms the border of Nassau County. The basin includes the Nassau River and the Crooked River. Salinity is seen east of US 17/I 95. It is a black water river, which has an impact on dissolved oxygen. Testing on the St. Mary's does not include enough data points, some of which are monitored by SJRWMD, some by GA. There are two flow meters, one in each state. 75-80% of the watershed is working forest with little public access. The forestry industry monitors water quantity for fire fighting purposes, and uses best management practices related to water quality. It is not known for sure if there are unlined industrial landfills or dumping sites in the basin. The St. Mary's is not used for irrigation or drinking water at this time.

Water quantity was also discussed. GA used to have a moratorium on aquifer storage and injection wells. Woodrow Sapp acts as a utility and provides water from wells that it sells to Camden County. Otherwise, water is usually provided by the municipality. The GA data that is



comparable to the NFL District Water Supply Plan is contained in the Suwannee Satilla and Coastal regions water supply plans. These will all be posted on the committee webpage. There was discussion related to private wells, which use the Brunswick Aquifer, and comparisons were made between GA and FL as to the rules for when permission is required for a private well (if more than 2" in diameter in FL, more than 4" in diameter in GA).

Other data sources and organizations were discussed. The USGS is currently doing a hydrological survey on groundwater. Reference was made to the GA Coastal Research Council, which is a clearinghouse for water related data. The GA Water Coalition includes over 230 organizations and does the Dirty Dozen report, which has been successful at highlighting issues. The organization was compared to 1000 Friends of Florida. The 2015 Report Card is based solely on Coastal Resources data.

Staff is noting ideas that come up, to be considered as the committee considers recommendations at the end of the process:

- Develop a schematic of who is working on water.
- Consider the model of GA Coastal Research Council as a model for a clearinghouse.
- Look into landfills.
- Consider Citizen and Student Science for testing. A \$4000 unit can test for 70+ contaminants (Made by HACH).
- Georgia Pacific is a large water consumer in both states.
- The St. Mary's River Management Committee may be a model, as it has bi-state membership.
- The modeling group of DNR may be a resource.
- Report card and clearinghouse still seem reasonable ideas.

The Chair asked for public comment but there was none. The next meeting will be April 12 at NEFRC. The meeting ended at 4pm.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates:** 4/12, 5/10, 6/14, 7/12, 8/9 and 9/13