

St. Marys River

Wild and Scenic River Study

Florida and Georgia



**Draft Report
October 1993**

Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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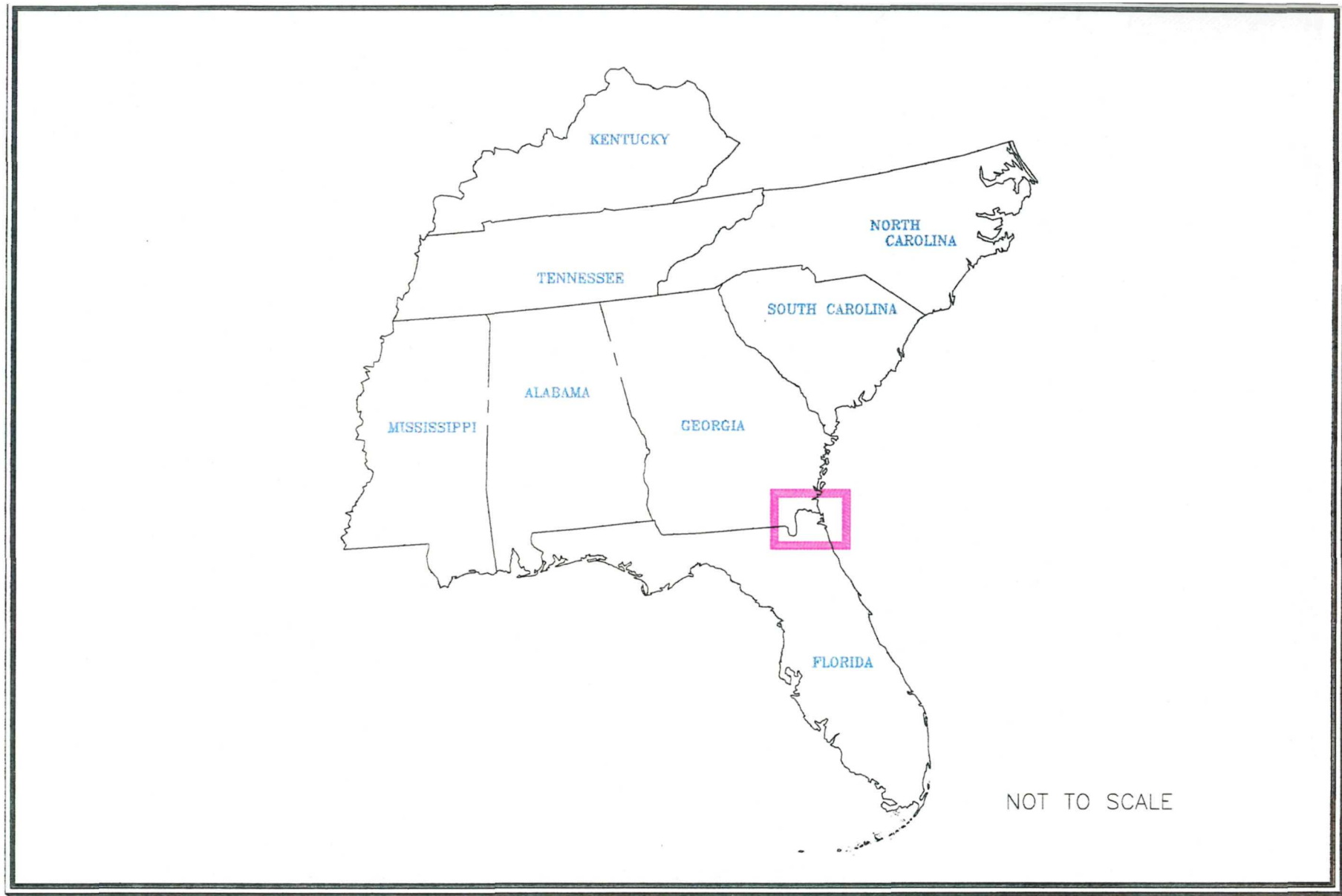
Introductory Brochure

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“St. Marys River Study - Preliminary Eligibility
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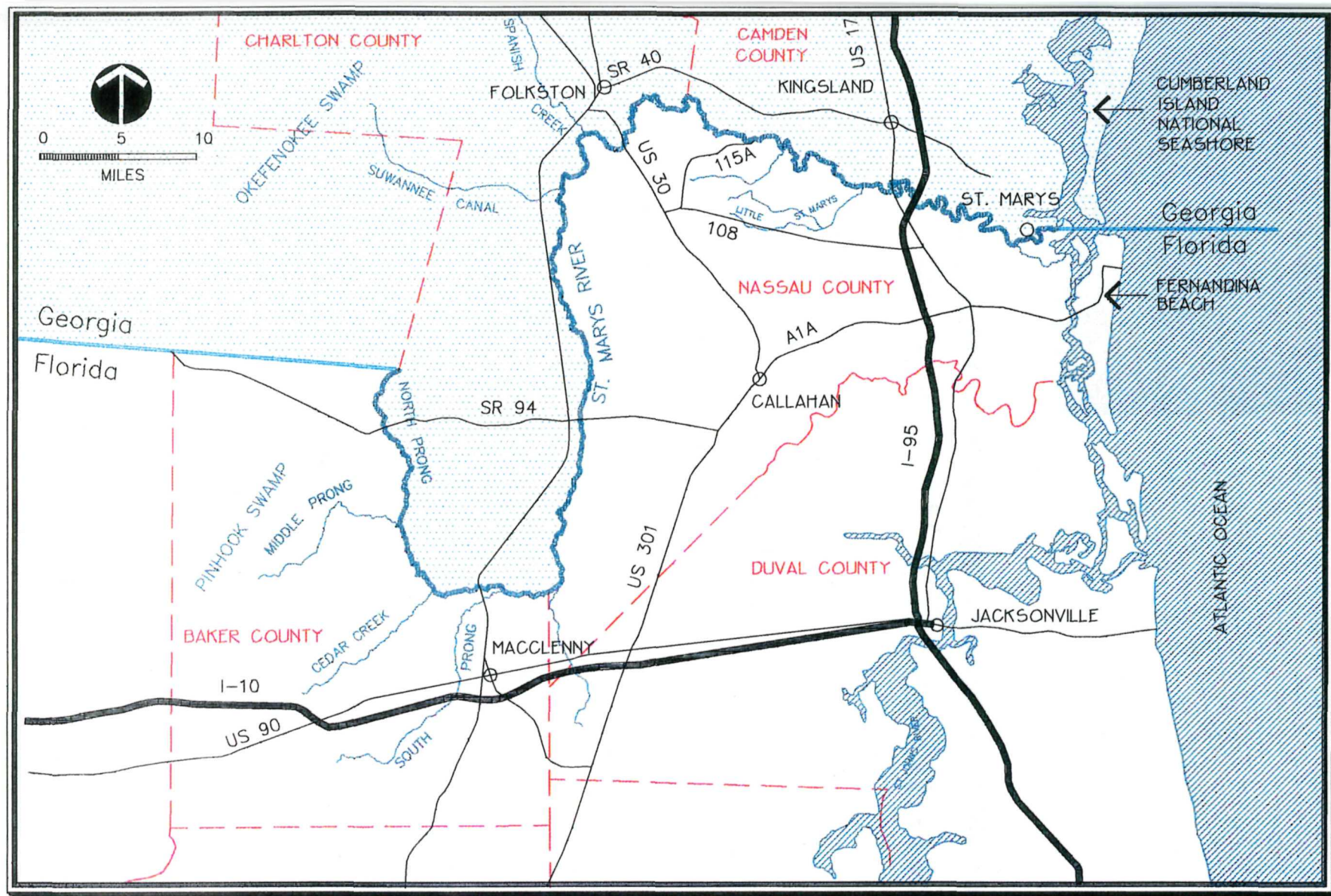
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ST. MARYS RIVER LOCATION MAP

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH



ST. MARYS RIVER — Area Map

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE



I. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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This study was undertaken at the direction of the Congress to determine the potential of the St. Marys River for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The 126 mile long St. Marys River is located in southeast Georgia and northeast Florida. The river flows through Camden and Charlton Counties in Georgia and Nassau and Baker Counties in Florida and forms the border between the two states for approximately 125 miles. The study area included the river from the headwaters of the North Prong of the St. Marys River at river mile 125.8 downstream to the confluence of Bells River at river mile 12. It was found that the river is free-flowing and has "outstandingly remarkable" characteristics which makes it eligible for national designation from its beginning at the confluence of the North and Middle Prongs downstream to its confluence with Bells River, a total length of approximately 101.8 river miles.

The eligible portion of the river was divided into the following segments for purposes of classification:

<u>Beginning of Segment</u>	<u>End of Segment</u>	<u>Classification</u>
Confluence of N. Prong and Middle Prong (RM 113.8)	Trader's Hill (RM 59)	Scenic
Trader's Hill (RM 59)	Approx. 1 mi. downstream of U.S. 301 crossing (RM 55)	Recreational
Approx. 1 mi. downstream of U.S. 301 crossing (RM 55)	Approx. 1 mi. upstream of Flea Hill (RM 42)	Scenic
Approximately 1 mi. upstream of Flea Hill (RM 42)	Confluence of Bells River and St. Marys (RM12)	Recreational

The river is determined to be suitable for designation between the confluence of the North and Middle Prongs (RM 113.8) downstream to approximately one mile above Flea Hill (RM 42). The river downstream of river mile 42 is determined to be not suitable for designation due to roadway, rail, and development intrusion into the river corridor and the strong tidal influence which may make recreational activities such as canoeing hazardous.

Four alternatives were developed and are presented under Section VII. Alternatives and Conclusions. These include 1. No Action/Existing Trends; 2. Designation with National Park Service management; 3. Designation with cooperative Georgia/Florida state management; 4. Designation with special legislation to allow local management by a local river management council.

Alternative 4 is the recommended alternative and involves designation of the approximately 71.8 miles of the St. Marys River from the North and Middle Prong confluence to approximately 1 mile upstream of Flea Hill as a locally managed component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This recommendation is the best alternative to address important concerns of local citizens regarding local protection of the river resource. These concerns include: Federal acquisition of private lands through eminent domain; increased Federal control on private lands; protection of traditional activities such as hunting, timbering, and recreational uses; and a coordinated management of the river.



II. BACKGROUND

II. BACKGROUND

Introduction

Beginning with our first early days of settlement, Americans have viewed our nation's abundance of rivers as a vast resource. After decades of harnessing our rivers for growth and development, our environmental conscience was awakened in the 1960s to the fact that clean, natural waterways are not in endless supply. Congress, acting upon this growing public concern, passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90542) in 1968. This Act recognizes the value of rivers and their environs as outstanding natural treasures that must be protected for the enjoyment of future generations. Several rivers were designated for immediate protection and additional rivers were authorized for study as potential components of the Federally protected system. Through the years Congress has responded to the desires of the citizenry by amending the Act to either designate or authorize study of additional rivers. In 1990 Congress passed Public Law 101-364, which authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to study the St. Marys River (Georgia and Florida) to determine if it qualifies and is suitable for National Wild and Scenic River status.

Study Area

The St. Marys River Basin drains an area of approximately 1,500 square miles of the coastal plains of southeast Georgia and northeast Florida. Of the total, approximately 540 square miles are located in Georgia and 960 square miles are located in Florida. The headwaters of both the St. Marys River and Suwannee River originate in the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Delineation of the St.

Marys River and Suwannee River watersheds in the Okefenokee Swamp is difficult.

The North Prong of the St. Marys River leaves the Okefenokee Swamp near Baxter, Florida and flows in a southerly direction to where it joins the Middle Prong of the St. Marys River, forming the St. Marys River.

The St. Marys River continues in a southerly direction and joins the South Prong of the St. Marys River near Macclenny, Florida. It is in this area where the river cuts through Trail Ridge (a Pleistocene relict barrier) and then flows in a northerly direction to Folkston, Georgia. The stream flows in an easterly direction from Folkston to the Cumberland Sound near the town of St. Marys, Georgia. The St. Marys River forms the boundary between the States of Georgia and Florida.

The topography of the drainage basin is relatively flat with poor drainage conditions. Overland slopes range from 4 percent along Trail Ridge to less than 0.1 percent at the Okefenokee Swamp and the mouth of the St. Marys River. Elevations in the watershed range from over 170 feet mean sea level (msl) at the crest of Trail Ridge to msl at the tidally influenced Cumberland Sound. The soil composition of the basin is primarily sandy loam.

The St. Marys River corridor is heavily canopied, with southern blackwater river swamp communities and southern pine woodlands on the sand ridges. The pine woodlands are extensively managed as timber farms and are quite dominant in the watershed. Pine woodlands come down to the river bank in a number of areas affecting erosion of the sand banks. Development

influences within the corridor occur mostly near the communities of Folkston, St. Marys, and Kingston, Georgia. Special features within the corridor include the St. Mary's River and its excellent blackwater, white sand bar riverscape; the large areas of wooded waterscape; the coastal marsh and delta area; the swollen-based swamp communities; the sand ridge communities; the tributary swamps and creeks; and the large number of historic settlements along the river such as Trader's Hill and Camp Pickney.

The river is home to typical coastal plains fauna such as raccoon, deer, mice, dove, quail, various bats, fox, bobcat shrew, and moles. As on all coastal plain rivers, the reptiles and amphibians are abundant. The Eastern box turtle, Eastern painted turtle, spotted turtle, and mud turtle are found along with various frogs and salamanders. Some of the snakes include the brown water snake, banded water snake, hognose snake, rat snake, corn snake and pigmy rattlesnake.

Vultures, hawks, mallards, woodcocks, woodpeckers, egrets, ibises, and grackles are a few of the birds present. The redbreasted sunfish, channel catfish, bullhead catfish, and the spotted sucker are all found in fairly large numbers. Tables A-1 through A-4 in Appendix A list additional species present in the St. Marys River Basin.

Tree farming is an active land use, with the area being nearly totally forested. The majority of the forest land within the corridor is managed for its timber production. The managed areas are clearly evident with their monoculture stands of pines.

With very few crossings, excellent water quality, and natural beauty, the St. Marys corridor is unusual in its relatively pristine environmental condition.

Study Process

In January 1991, the NPS began evaluating the river's natural resource values and assessing the local interest in a river protection plan. The study team gathered information about the river's natural resources, held public meetings, and studied the river by land, boat and airplane in order to make a determination of the river's eligibility for National Wild and Scenic River designation. A number of protection alternatives were considered for making recommendations to Congress concerning the river's future protection and suitability for designation.

The County Commission Chairman in each of the four study area counties was asked in August 1991 to suggest local representatives to serve on a study advisory group to assist the study team. The concept of a local management committee had previously been suggested by local interests at the Congressional sub-committee hearings on the study authorization. The St. Marys River Management Committee was subsequently established and began monthly meetings in November 1991. This group decided that their primary goal would be to gain an understanding of existing Federal, state and local regulations affecting the St. Marys River, and to determine what additional local actions would be needed to assure protection of the river's resources. A number of the representatives on this committee openly opposed Federal involvement in the river's future protection. A second local citizens group, Friends of the St. Marys River, was formed in January 1992 by environmental interest in south Georgia and north Florida for the sole purpose of promoting national wild and scenic river designation for the St. Marys River. Representatives of both groups were asked to review and comment on sections of this draft study report during its preparation to assure that the plans and alternatives developed by the study team reflect local ideas and interests.



III. EVALUATION

III. EVALUATION

Eligibility:

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that in order for a river to be eligible for designation, it must be free-flowing and must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.

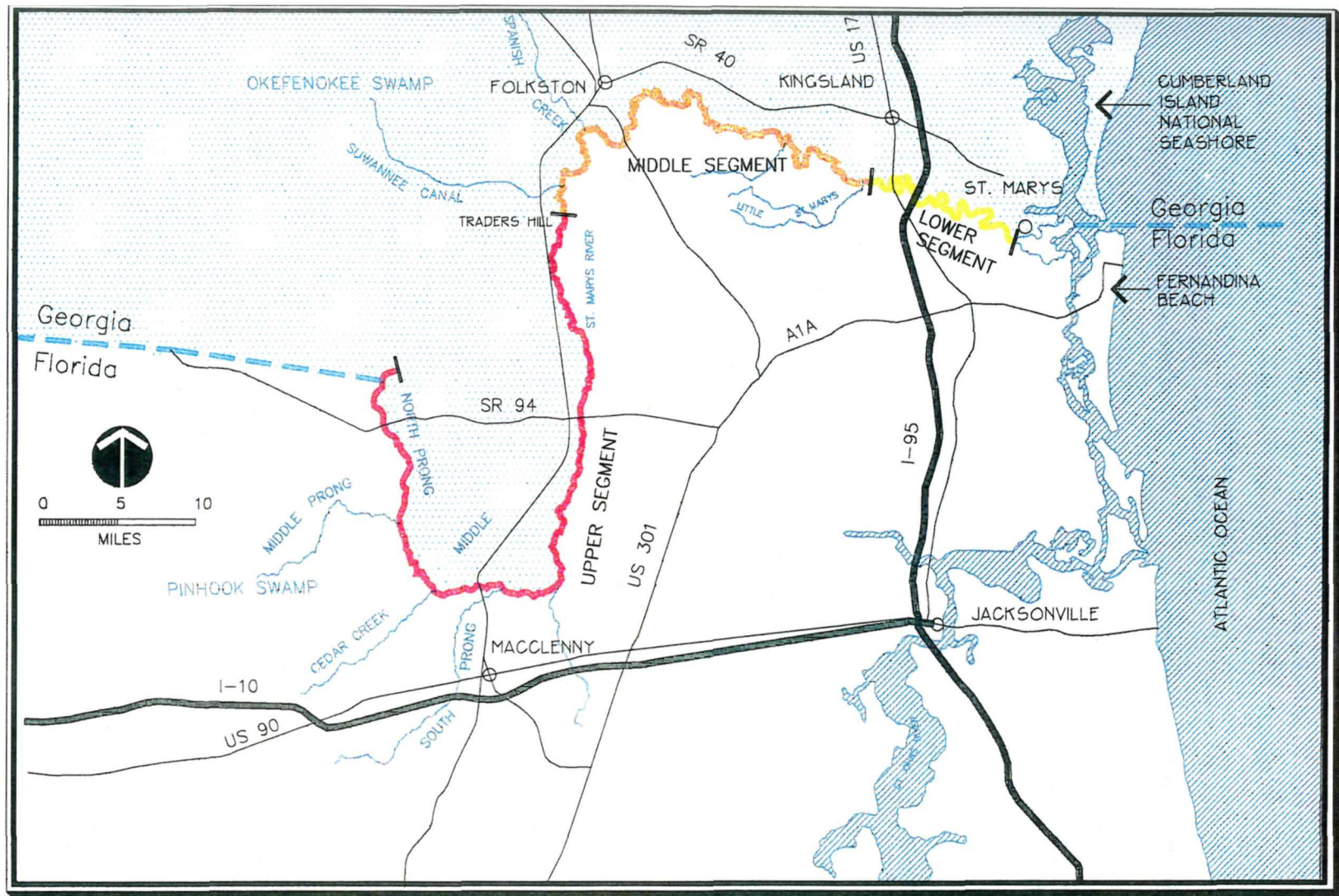
The St. Marys River has three distinct natural zones along its course. In order to treat each zone equally, the river was divided into three segments and each segment was evaluated separately. The map on page 17 shows the approximate location of the "lower," "middle" and "upper" segments of the river. The lower segment includes approximately 18 river miles (RMs), from the Bells River confluence (RM 12) to approximately 3 RMs above the U.S. Highway 17 bridge crossing (RM 27). This lower segment is tidal and represents a coastal estuary environment.

The middle segment includes approximately 29 RMs, from the upper limit of the middle segment (RM 30 in the vicinity of White Oak Plantation) to approximately RM 59 in the vicinity of Trader's Hill. This segment has tidal influence, with the river channel becoming more defined and the shoreline vegetation changing

character from marsh land to typical wetland vegetation and extensive bald cypress and blackgum swamp forest.

The upper segment includes approximately 66 RMs, from the upper limit of the middle segment to approximately RM 125 at the headwaters of the North Prong in the Okefenokee Swamp. Due to public request during the course of the study, approximately 12 RMs of the Middle Prong was also evaluated jointly by the NPS and the National Forest Service. The Middle Prong is entirely within the State of Florida, Baker County, and partially within the Osceola National Forest. The upper segment contains a mixture of slash and loblolly pines and various oaks. Narrow sloughs and depressions contain typical bald cypress and ogeeche tupelo floodplain swamp vegetation.

The results of these eligibility evaluations indicates that the lower section, middle section and the upper section upstream to the confluence of the Middle Prong and the North Prong have "outstandingly remarkable" values that qualify these sections for national designation. The North Prong was found not to have any "outstandingly remarkable" values and therefore is considered ineligible for designation.



ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION SEGMENTS

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH



UPPER SEGMENT



MIDDLE SEGMENT



LOWER SEGMENT

Classification:

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act further requires the St. Marys River Study to indicate the appropriate classification should the river be designated. Rivers are classified as either wild, scenic, or recreational, depending on the river's degree of natural character.

The classification categories are defined as follows:

Wild river areas - Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic river areas - Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational river areas - Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Each segment of the river was evaluated against criteria listed on the matrices on pages 20, 21, and 22 and by using the river corridor development criteria developed by the Department of the Interior during the "Nationwide Rivers Inventory", (NRI) published in 1982.

Table 1, lists examples of development criteria point values used for evaluating development in the NRI. The recommended river classifications for the St. Marys River are indicated on the map on page 23.

TABLE 1

Partial Listing - National River Inventory (NRI) Development Values

Disqualifiers

Airport, large
Canal, parallel active
City, over 10,000 population
Dump, large
Factory, active
Gas/oil field
Mine, strip active
Paper plant
Industrial area
Bridges
6 Graded dirt road
20 Paved road
40 Paved 4-lane road
15 Railroad
10 Unpaved all-weather road

Roads

9 Graded dirt parallel
10 Paved ending/enchroachment
30 Paved parallel
75 Paved 4-lane parallel
3 Primitive parallel
5 Unpaved ending/enchroaching

Structures

40 Business	75 Sand and gravel pit
10 Barn	40 Sawmill, small
7 Cabin	40 Sewage plant
15 Cemetery	25 Storage tank, water
25 Church	30 Store, country
30 Country Club	30 Swimming pool
30 Dairy	75 Town, 500-9,999 population
8 Dwelling	10 Ramp, paved boat
20 Garbage dump	7 Park, wayside
50 Junkyard	10 Picnic area
30 Marina	40 Motel
40 Trailer Park	

EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE LOWER SEGMENT
ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA

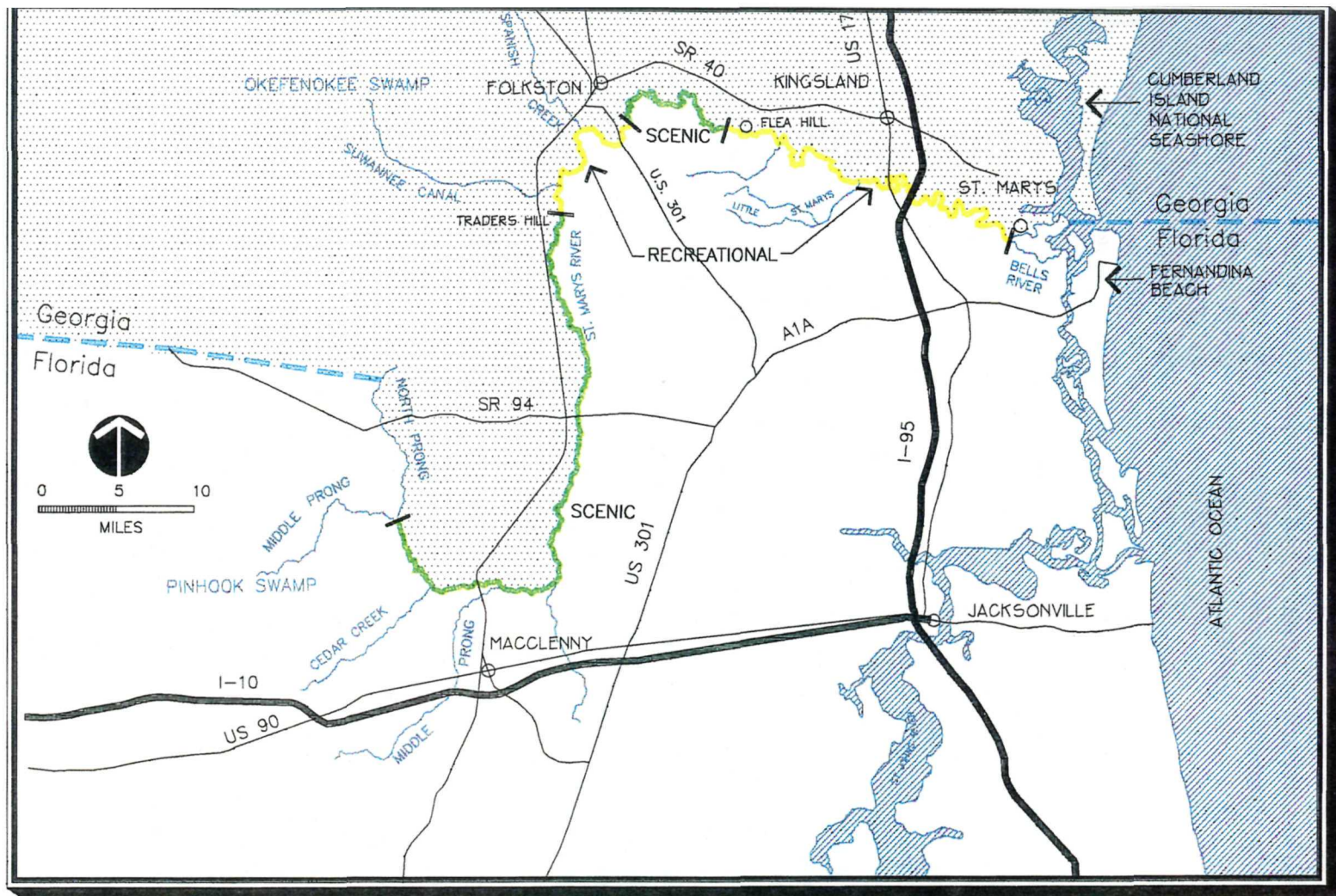
<u>VALUE</u>	<u>MINIMAL</u>	<u>COMMON</u>	<u>DISTINCTIVE</u>
SCENIC			
Landform	- Little variety	X Not unusual	- Complex, unusual
Rock Features	X Lacking	- Not unusual	- Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	- Homogeneous	X Some diversity	- Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	- Flow distracts	X Flow sustains	- Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	X Distractive	- Noticeable	- Unimposing
Degree of Relief	- Minimum	X Moderate	- Large
Clarity of Water	- Unclear, constant	- Seasonally turbid	X Mostly clear
Water Falls	X Lacking	- Small, unimpressive	- Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Picnicking	- Undesirable	X Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	- Lacking	X Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	- Sporadic	X 1-2 seasons	- 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	- Few opportunities	- Expected species	X Unusual species, high variety
Class/Difficulty	X Beginner ((I-III))	- Intermediate ((I-IV))	- Difficult (I-VI)
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	- Unexposed	X Opportunity for study	- Encourages study
Caves	X None identified	- Present, typical	- Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	- Small variety	X Mod. variety, typical, expected	- Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	X Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	X Typical, representative	- Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	- Unlikely	X Unsurveyed/potential	- Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	- Unlikely	X Unsurveyed/potential	- Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	X Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	X Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	X Unique in occurrence/quality

EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE MIDDLE SEGMENT ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA

VALUE	MINIMAL	COMMON	DISTINCTIVE
SCENIC			
Landform	- Little variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not unusual	- Complex, unusual
Rock Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Not unusual	- Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	- Homogeneous	- Some diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	- Flow distracts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flow sustains	- Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distractive	- Noticeable	- Unimposing
Degree of Relief	- Minimum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	- Large
Clarity of Water	- Unclear, constant	- Seasonally turbid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly clear
Water Falls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Small, unimpressive	- Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Picnicking	- Undesirable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	- Lacking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	- Sporadic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-2 seasons	- 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	- Few opportunities	- Expected species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unusual species, high variety
Class/Difficulty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginner (I-III)	- Intermediate (I-IV)	- Difficult (I-VI)
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	- Unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for study	- Encourages study
Caves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None identified	- Present, typical	- Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	- Small variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mod. variety, typical, expected	- Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Typical, representative	- Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	- Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	- Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality

**EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE UPPER SEGMENT
ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA**

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>MINIMAL</u>	<u>COMMON</u>	<u>DISTINCTIVE</u>
SCENIC			
Landform	<input type="checkbox"/> Little variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not unusual	<input type="checkbox"/> Complex, unusual
Rock Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Not unusual	<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	<input type="checkbox"/> Homogeneous	<input type="checkbox"/> Some diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow distracts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flow sustains	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	<input type="checkbox"/> Distractive	<input type="checkbox"/> Noticeable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unimposing
Degree of Relief	<input type="checkbox"/> Minimum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Large
Clarity of Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Unclear, constant	<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonally turbid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly clear
Water Falls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Small, unimpressive	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Picnicking	<input type="checkbox"/> Undesirable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	<input type="checkbox"/> Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	<input type="checkbox"/> Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	<input type="checkbox"/> Sporadic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-2 seasons	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	<input type="checkbox"/> Few opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Expected species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unusual species, high variety
Floatability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months/year	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months/year	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 months/year
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for study	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourages study
Caves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None identified	<input type="checkbox"/> Present, typical	<input type="checkbox"/> Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Small variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	<input type="checkbox"/> Ubiquitous species	<input type="checkbox"/> Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem degraded, mundane	<input type="checkbox"/> Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	<input type="checkbox"/> Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	<input type="checkbox"/> Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Small variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	<input type="checkbox"/> Ubiquitous species	<input type="checkbox"/> Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem degraded, mundane	<input type="checkbox"/> Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality



RIVER CLASSIFICATION

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH



SCENIC



RECREATIONAL

Suitability:

In order for a river to be recommended for National Wild and Scenic River designation, it must be both eligible and suitable (see *Suitability Map*, page 27). An array of alternatives was developed for public discussion and consideration in order to determine if the river was "suitable" for designation. Alternatives considered include a "no action" alternative, national designation with National Park Service management, national designation with joint management by the State's of Florida and Georgia, and national designation with management by local council created specifically for this purpose. A brief description of each alternative considered follows:

Alternative A - No Action/Existing Trends

Under this alternative no action would be taken by Federal, state, local government or private organizations to provide any special protection for the St. Marys River. Existing conditions and trends would determine the future use of the river.

Alternative B - Congressional designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River as a national wild and scenic river with National Park Service management

Congress would amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River as a national wild and scenic river. The National Park Service would prepare a comprehensive management plan and a land protection plan following designation. These plans would guide the NPS management of the St. Marys River in a manner similar to other National Park System units, and consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Alternative C - Secretary of the Interior designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River within the States of Florida and Georgia with cooperative management between Florida and Georgia

Designation of any portion of the St. Marys River by the Secretary of the Interior requires that the river be a designated component of an existing state rivers system. In addition, the Governors of both Georgia and Florida would be required to submit their proposed management plans for protection of the rivers natural values when requesting national designation. If the Secretary feels the proposed state management plans will protect the river in a manner consistent with the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, he can designate the river into the national system.

Alternative D - Congressional designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River with special legislation establishing a local river management council.

Congress would amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the St. Marys River, and authorize the creation of a local river management council. The NPS would be authorized to provide financial and technical assistance. The council would be responsible for management coordination of all non-Federal lands within the designated river corridor, consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

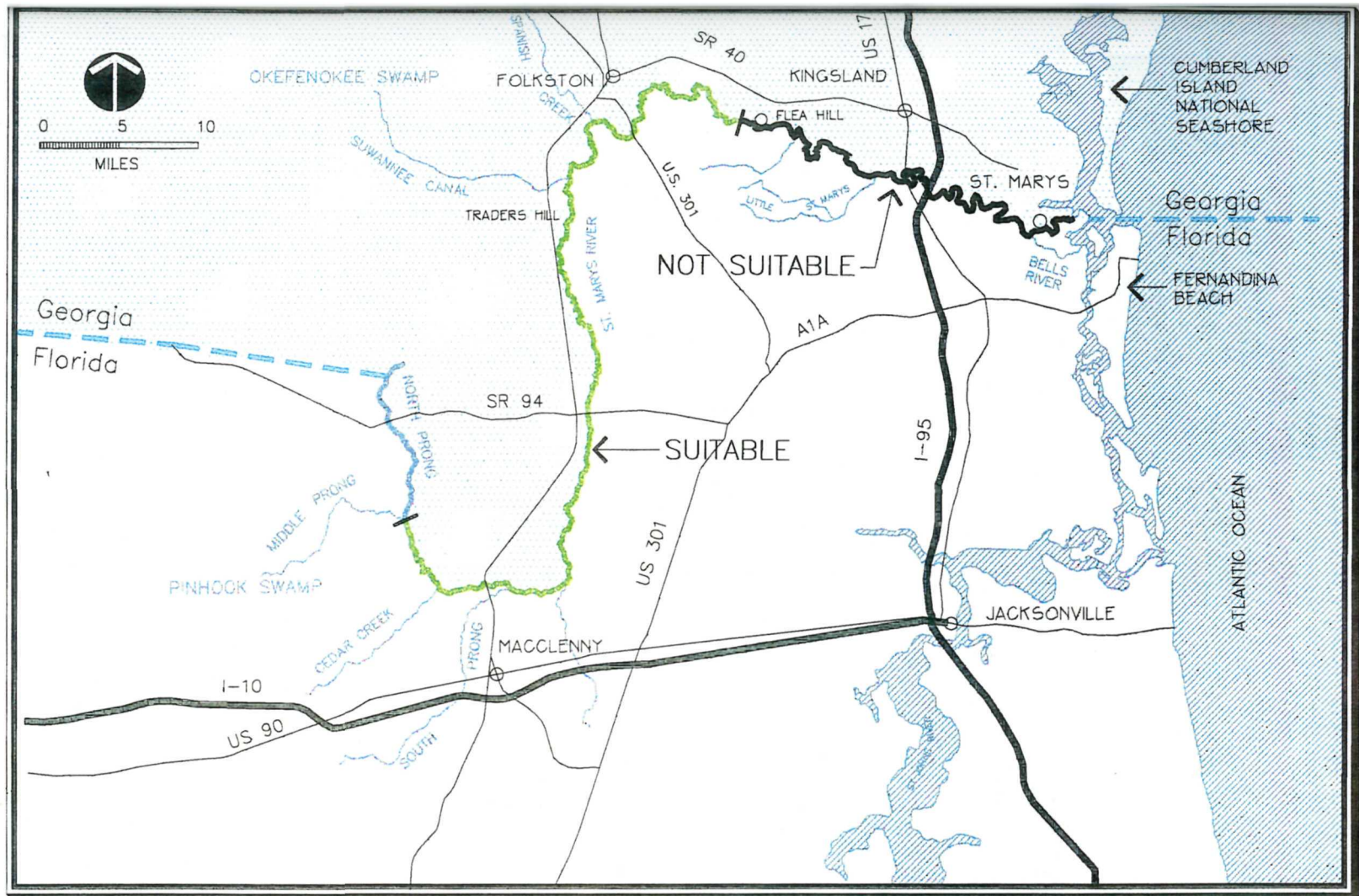
Several factors were especially important in evaluating the suitability of the St. Marys River for national wild and scenic river status. First, it was apparent that many Federal, state and local regulations and programs currently exist which, if properly monitored and adhered to, would provide protection to the St. Marys River and surrounding resources. Much of the St. Marys River is a coastal

stream with a wide floodplain and vast acreage of wetlands which are protected from development. These existing protections are discussed in detail in Chapter V.

Secondly, many local citizens voicing opinions during this study oppose additional Federal or state presence on the river. They feel the river should be protected and is presently in need of additional protection, but that this protection

can best be accomplished at the local level. Acquisition of private lands, especially by condemnation, is strongly opposed. Finally, the necessity of river protection by an entity which could cross political boundaries among the 4 counties and 2 states was apparent.

All of these considerations weighed heavily in the evaluation and selection of the alternatives.



SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH



SUITABLE



NOT SUITABLE



IV. THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT

IV. THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT

Location and Recreational Access

(Portions of this section taken from Southern Georgia Canoeing, Sehlinger and Otey, 1980)

The St. Marys River is located in southeast Georgia and northeast Florida and forms a portion of the border between the two states. The main river corridor runs through two counties in Georgia, Camden County and Charlton County, and two counties in Florida, Baker County and Nassau County.

The river originates from two similar swamps. The North Prong of the St. Marys begins in the southeastern corner of the Okefenokee Swamp in Ware and Charlton counties, Georgia and flows south forming the Georgia-Florida state line. The Middle Prong begins in the Pinhook Swamp portion of the Osceola National Forest in northern Baker County, Florida. The Middle Prong flows east for approximately 12 RMs before joining the North Prong to form the St. Marys River. The North Prong and Middle Prong join approximately 2 RMs below the Florida Highway 120 bridge crossing.

At times of the year when water levels are high, recreational floating can begin on the North Prong below the Georgia Highway 94 bridge crossing near Moniac, Georgia, but can be extremely difficult. The river is full of snags and is not very scenic. The river course gradually becomes more defined as the North Prong nears its confluence with the Middle Prong. The approximately 6 RMs between Moniac and North Prong-Middle Prong confluence is characterized by wooded swampland of varying distances on either side of a low stream bank.



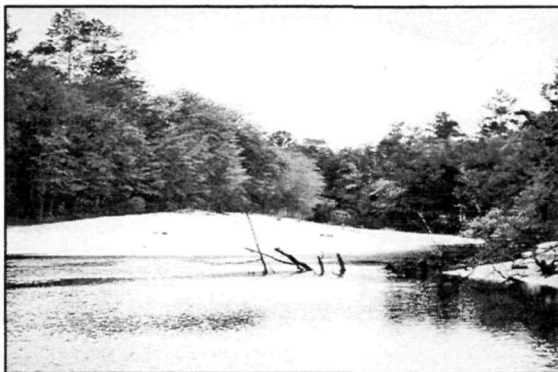
Low stream banks are typical in the area of the North and Middle Prongs confluence.

When the Middle Prong joins the North Prong the river doubles in width and becomes immediately more winding. White sandbars begin to reach out into the stream course and the stream bank becomes higher with the occurrence of occasional pine bluffs. Shoreline development becomes more evident as the river approaches the next good public access location, the Georgia Highway 121 bridge.



The river widens and white sandbars start to occur after the confluence of the Middle Prong.

Approximately 5 RMs below the Georgia Highway 121 bridge, the South Prong of the St. Marys enters the river from Florida. This prong is much smaller than the Middle and North Prongs. The river's natural setting is interrupted by shoreline development several times between the Highway 121 bridge and the South Prong confluence. Downstream from the South Prong, the river turns north and flows in this direction for approximately 45 RMs until it reaches Folkston, Georgia. This northerly flowing segment remains largely unspoiled. It begins to widen slightly and entrenches itself in increasingly steeper banks. Bluffs and pine forests intermix with swamp flora and provide good high-water camp sites.



River banks heighten as the river turns north.

A new (1991) access ramp is provided near St. George, Georgia, at the Georgia Highway 94 bridge crossing. Between St. George and Folkston the river's banks rise to more than 7 feet and are often backed by sandy bluffs standing 20 feet or more above the river. The river channel becomes increasingly well defined and deep.

By the time the river reaches the Traders Hill county park (Georgia), powerboat traffic becomes common. The U.S. Highway 1/301



Public boat ramp near St. George, GA.

bridge crossing near Folkston is approximately one-half way along the river's course. The Florida bank is developed for several miles in this area.

The river's width below Folkston averages 90 to 120 feet. The St. Marys high banks, particularly on the Florida side, persist nearly to the river mouth with the highest bluffs found near Crandall, Florida, at Reids and Roses Bluffs. The St. Marys flows for approximately 30 RMs between the U.S. 1/301 bridge crossing and the next crossing near Kingsland, Georgia, where U.S. Highway 17 and I-95 bridges both cross within several miles of each other.



The river below Folkston.



The river widens and the white sandbars disappear below Folkston.

Demographics

Counties along the St. Marys River corridor have all experienced population increases in the past decade. The most significant growth occurred in Camden County, Georgia where population increased from 13,371 in 1980 to 30,167 in 1990; a change of 126 percent. Reflecting this increase, the City of St. Marys, in Camden County, grew from 3,596 in 1980 to 8,187 in 1990, up 128 percent. Charlton County, also in Georgia, saw a population increase of 16 percent, from 7,343 in 1980 to 8,496.

In Florida, population followed a similar upward trend. Baker County's population grew 21 percent, from 15,289 in 1980 to 18,486 in 1990. Within the county, the City of Macclenny grew from a population of 3,851 in 1980 to 3,966 in 1990. Duval County and the City of Jacksonville both increased 17 percent, from 571,003 to 672,971 and from 540,920 to 635,230 respectively. Nassau County's population grew from 32,894 in 1980 to 43,941 in 1990, an increase of 34 percent. Only the City of Hilliard, in Nassau County, saw a decrease in population. Hilliard shrank from 1,879 in 1980 to 1,751 in 1990, a loss of 9 percent while Yulee grew from 3,168 in 1980 to 6,915 in 1990, a gain of 118 percent.

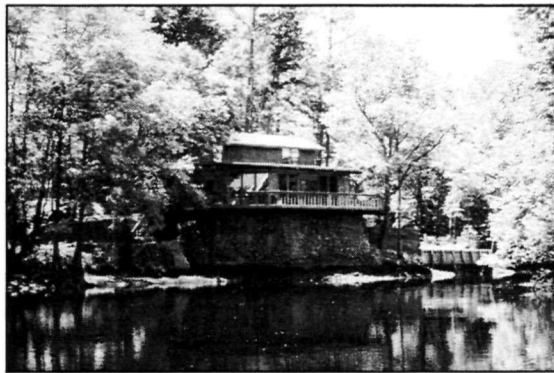
Landownership and Land Use

A high percentage of the land within the St. Marys drainage basin is in large-tract ownership of 640 acres or more. Four large tracts are in Federal ownership, two large tracts in state ownership, and the remaining area is in private holdings. The Federal lands include the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Ware and Charlton Counties, Georgia and the Osceola National Forest in Baker County, Florida.

Ownership of lands not within the large tracts consists primarily of parcels ranging in size from 5 to 10 acres up to a half section or more.

The predominant land use within the basin is silviculture. Forest or timberland covers 75 percent of Camden County, 98 percent of Charlton County, 90 percent of Baker County, and 80 percent of Nassau County. Most of the residential areas are located near the towns or cities. Flea Hill is one notable exception located directly adjacent to the river in Charlton County, Georgia. Some cabins and fishing shacks can also be found along the river with the greatest numbers located on the lower portion between Traders Hill and Kings Ferry where 44 were identified in the 18 mile stretch. They are typically located on the higher elevations adjacent to the river.

Residential Development Along The River





Natural Resources

The St. Marys River extends for approximately 126 miles running from the Okefenokee Swamp to the Atlantic Ocean near St. Marys, Georgia. Typically currents run moderately slow. This is due to the relatively low average gradient of 0.28 m/km (Fowler and Holder, 1987). The mean discharge measured at Macclenny, Florida is about 19 cubic meters per second (USGA 1986).

The river is a blackwater stream with naturally high color and low dissolved solids as a result of its extensive wetlands system. The water quality is considered excellent by the Florida Department of Natural Resources as per their 305(b) report, 1990, and has been given a rating as a Class III water body. This designation defines the river's intended use as recreation and the propagation, and maintenance of a healthy, well-balanced population of fish and wildlife.

Discharge point sources within the basin include 14 wastewater treatment plants and industrial sites. Five of these are downstream of the river study area. Localized degradation of water quality is seen due to lowering of dissolved oxygen amounts and elevation of nutri-

ent levels. Tributaries leading into the St. Marys, such as Turkey Creek and the Little St. Marys River, generally have poorer water quality than the mainstream due to point sources discharging into them. National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES, Clean Water Act of 1972) dischargers in the St. Marys River basin are listed in Table 2.

Low sandy bluffs are the major geologic feature displayed by the river with several outcroppings of limestone also noted. The bluffs continue through a large portion of the river and can become quite steep and high, occasionally reaching 20 feet above normal water levels. Large white quartz sand point bars provide a sharp contrast to the tanin colored waters of the channel.

The river channel is very meandering with numerous S-bends, especially in the middle and upper portions of the river upstream of Folkston. Oxbow lakes can also be found in these areas. Downstream from Folkston the river has a tidal influence and the sandbars characteristic of the upper and middle portions of the river are not present.

There are no storage reservoirs, hydroelectric facilities or stream diversions on the St. Marys River.

TABLE 2

NPDES Discharges in St. Marys River Basin

Discharge Name	Receiving Water	Discharge Type	Location
* Container Corp	Amelia River	I	Fernandina Beach
DOT Rest Area, I-10	Drainage ditch	D	Baker County
Eastwood Oaks Apts.	Polishing Pond	D	Hilliard
* Fernandina Beach	Amelia River	M	Fernandina Beach
Gilman Paper St. Marys	North River	I	City of St. Marys
Hilliard	Unnamed Stream	M	Hilliard
* ITT Fernandina	Amelia River	I	Fernandina Beach
Kingsland WWTP	Little Catfish Creek	M	Kingsland
Macclenny WWTP	Turkey Creek	M	Macclenny
* Marsh Cove Apartments	Amelia River	D	Fernandina Beach
Northeast Florida State Hospital	Turkey Creek	M	Macclenny
* St. Marys WWTP	St. Marys River	M	St. Marys
St. Marys Scrubby Bluff	St. Marys River	D	Kingsland
Okefenokee NWR	Okefenokee Swamp	M	Charlton County

Note: D = domestic wastewater.
I = industrial wastewater.
M = municipal and industrial wastewater.
WWTP = Wastewater treatment plant.

Source: EPA, 1992. Information in agency files.

* Indicates dischargers downstream of the study area.

Climate

The climate of the St. Marys River Basin is classified as subtropical with its long, hot, humid summers and cool winters. Sea breezes help cool the coastal areas in the summer which is also the wettest season of the year.

The average annual rainfall is 51.4 inches with approximately 33% to 50% of this falling in the summer. Fall is the driest season receiving approximately 20% of the yearly average. The average winter temperature is 53 degrees Fahrenheit with a average daily minimum of 43 degrees Fahrenheit. The average summer temperature is 81 degrees Fahrenheit with an average daily high of 88 degrees Fahrenheit.

Ecological Communities

Natural community types can best be grouped by the ecological segments of the river in which they commonly appear. The five ecological segments of the river include:

HEADWATERS - The headwaters are within the wetland region of the Okefenokee Basin. Wet flatwoods and swamp, bog, waterlily prairie wetland complexes of the Okefenokee-Pinhook system are typical of this segment. Typical plant communities include:

Carolina Bay - Shrub Bog
Pond Pine Pocosin
Prairie

BLUFFS - Sandhills and xeric flatwoods dominate natural upland vegetation with slope forests, seepage slopes, and bay swamp downslopes supported by seepage through the porous soils. Typical plant communities include:

Longleaf Pine/Turkey Oak Sandhill
Live Oak - Laurel Oak Upland Forest
Seepage Slope
Bay Forest

FRESHWATER RIVER SYSTEMS - This area is characteristic of the middle section of the river and includes extensive riverine ecosystems with broad forested wetland floodplains. Natural communities include:

Blackwater River Cypress - Gum Swamp
Blackwater River Levee Forest
Blackwater River Bottomland Hardwoods
Creek Swamp
Floodplain Lake

FLATWOODS - Flatwoods dominate throughout the basin and particularly the upslopes of the floodplain wetlands along the river's central stretches. Most of the native pinelands have been converted to silviculture but remnants of the following communities can still be found:

Longleaf Pine/Blackjack
Oak/Wiregrass Longleaf Flatwoods
Slash Pine Flatwoods
Cypress Pond
Open Depression Pond

TIDAL SYSTEMS - A zone of estuarine influence characterized by saltmarsh and maritime hammock extends from the Sea Islands west to the St. Marys Meander Plain. Typical natural communities include:

Smooth Cordgrass
(*Spartina alterniflora*) Marsh
Black Needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*)
Marsh Sawgrass-Wild Rice
(*Cladium - Zizaniopsis*) Marsh
Wax Myrtle - Yaupon Holly -
Saltbush Shrub Marsh
Tidal Cypress - Gum - Maple Swamp Forest
Maritime Forest

Fauna

The much varied ecological communities and the fact that the St. Marys River flows through relatively low population density areas help the St. Marys basin function as critical habitat for a number of species. It provides important travel corridors for the Florida Black Bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*), dry sandhills for the Sherman's Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger shermanii*), open pine habitat for the South eastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*), Red Cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), and Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), and valuable foraging, roosting, and nesting habitat for a wide variety of wading birds.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) has records of the endangered Wood Stork, the threatened Red Cockaded Woodpecker, Eastern Indigo Snake, and the Florida Pine Snake, a species of special concern, in the St. Marys River corridor. Other terrestrial species along the corridor undoubtedly include the threatened Bald Eagle, and species of special concern such as the Osprey, and the smaller egret and heron species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services has designated the St. Marys River as a Sandhill Crane area (1982).

There are 10 species of fish considered to be either rare or endangered by Florida or Georgia that are known to exist in the St. Marys River or its tributaries. These along with en-

dangered, threatened, and rare species of amphibians/reptiles, birds, and mammals are listed in Table 3, Page 37 and 38. A complete listing of fishes, amphibian/reptiles, probable breeding birds, and mammals of the St. Marys River basin can be found in Appendix A, Tables A-1 through A-4.

Flora

The St. Marys River is one of the more pristine blackwater rivers in Florida or Georgia. It has a wide variety and abundance of plant life along the river corridor. The Nature Conservancy has identified 20 biologically significant sites along the St. Marys River for protection.

Generally, hardwood and pine/palmetto forest communities dominate the interior portions of the corridor giving way to an estuarine environment towards the convergence with Cumberland Sound. It is within the estuarine area that the communities identified under the "Tidal Systems" ecological system can be found. Much of the pine forest communities are third or fourth generation slash pine being part of a large silviculture industry in the area.

There are 23 rare, threatened, and endangered plant species identified within the St. Marys River basin which are listed in Table 4, Page 39. Primary vegetation types of the natural communities within the St. Marys River basin are listed in Appendix A.

Table 3. Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Vertebrate Animals of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 1 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Ranking	TNC		USFWS Status	FGFWF Status	CGA Status
			State Ranking				
			FL	GA			
<u>Fish</u>							
<i>Acantharchus pomotis</i>	Mud Sunfish	G5	S3	S3	—	—	—
<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>	Shortnose Sturgeon	G3	S2	S2	E	E	E
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>	Atlantic Sturgeon	G3	S2	S3	T ^a	SSC	—
<i>Enneacanthus chaetodon</i>	Blackbanded Sunfish	G5	S3	S1S2	—	—	—
<i>Fundulus chrysotus</i>	Golden Tompminnow	G5	—	S3	—	—	—
<i>Fundulus cingulatus</i>	Banded Topminnow	G5?	S?	S3	—	—	—
<i>Lepisosteus platyrhincus</i>	Florida Gar	G5	—	S3?	—	—	—
<i>Lucania parva</i>	Rainwater Killifish	G5	—	S1	—	—	—
<i>Notropis emiliae</i>	Pugnose Minnow	G5	—	S3	—	—	—
<i>Umbra pygmaea</i>	Eastern Mudminnow	G5	S3	S3	—	—	—
<u>Amphibians and Reptiles</u>							
<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>	Flatwoods Salamander	G4?	S?	S3	T(S/A)	SSC	—
<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>	Eastern Tiger Salamander	G5	S3	S5	—	—	—
<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Canebrake Rattlesnake	G5	S3	S5	—	—	—
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Eastern Indigo Snake	G4T3	S3	S3	T	T	T
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Gopher Tortoise	G2	S2	S2	C2	SSC	—
<i>Kinosternon bauri</i>	Striped Mud Turtle	G5	S?	S2S3	—	E	—
<i>Lampropeltis calligaster</i>	Mole	G5	S2S3	S5	—	—	—
<i>Notophthalmus perstriatus</i>	Striped Newt	G3	S3	S2	—	—	—
<i>Ophisaurus compressus</i>	Island Glass Lizard	G4	—	S2	C2	—	—
<i>Pseudemys nelsoni</i>	Florida Red-bellied Turtle	G5	S?	S3	—	—	—
<i>Rana areolata</i>	Gopher Frog	G5	S3	S2S3	C2	SSC	—
<i>Stereochilus marginatus</i>	Many-lined Salamander	G4G5	S1	S4	—	—	—
<u>Birds</u>							
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's Hawk	G4	S3?	S3S4	—	—	—
<i>Amphispiza aestivalis</i>	Bachman's Sparrow	G3	S?	S3	C2	—	—
<i>Ammodramus maritima pelonota</i>	Smyrna Seaside Sparrow	G4T2Q?	S2?	S5	C2	—	—
<i>Aramus quarauna</i>	Limpkin	G5	S3	S1S2	—	SSC	—
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping Plover	G2	S2	S1S2	T	T	—
<i>Cistothorus palustris griseus</i>	Worthington's Marsh Wren	G5T3	S2	S5	—	SSC	—
<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	Swallow-tailed Kite	G5	—	S2	—	—	—
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	G3	S2	S1	—	—	—
<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i>	Florida Sandhill Crane	G5T2T3	S2S3	S2	—	T	—
<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	American Oystercatcher	G5	S3	S2S3	—	SSC	—
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	G3	S2S3	S2	E	T	E
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>	Black Rail	G3	S3?	S2?	—	—	—
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood Stork	G5	S2	S2	E	E	—
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Black-crowned Night Heron	G5	S3?	S3S4	—	—	—

Table 3. Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Vertebrate Animals of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 2 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Ranking	TNC		USFWS Status	FGFWF Status	CGA Status
			State Ranking				
			FL	GA			
<u>Birds (continued)</u>							
<i>Nycticorax violaceus</i>	Yellow-crowned night heron	G5	S3?	S3S5	—	—	—
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	G5	S3S4	S3	—	—	—
<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	Brown Pelican	G5	S3	S2	—	SSC	E
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	G2	S2	S2	E	T	E
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy ibis	G5	S2	S2S3	—	—	—
<i>Rhychops niger</i>	Black Skimmer	G5	S3	S4	—	—	—
<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Least Tern	G4	S3	S3S4	—	T	—
<i>Sterna maxima</i>	Royal Tern	G5	S3	S5	—	—	—
<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	Gull-billed Tern	G5	S?	S3	—	—	—
<u>Mammals</u>							
<i>Condylura cristata</i>	Star-nosed Mole	G5	—	S3?	—	—	—
<i>Myotis grisescens</i>	Gray Bat	G2	S1	S1	E	E	E
<i>Lasiurus inatermedius</i>	Yellow Bat	G4	S3	S2S3	—	—	—
<i>Neofiber alleni</i>	Roung-tailed Muskrat	G3?	S3?	S3	C2	—	—
<i>Pleconus rafinesquii</i>	Southeastern Big-eared Bat	G4	S3?	S3S4	C2	—	—
<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i>	Sherman's Fox Squirrel	G5	S3	S5	C2	SSC	—
<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	Florida Manatee	G2?	S2	S1S2	E	E	E
<i>Ursus americanus floridana</i>	Florida Black Bear	G5	S3	S4	C2	T ^b	—

^a Applicable only to the subspecies *A. o. desotoi*.

^b Not applicable in Baker and Columbia Counties and Apalachicola National Forest.

Note: USFWS Ranks

- C1 = candidate for federal listing, with enough substantial information on biological vulnerability and threats to support proposals for listing.
 C2 = candidate for listing, with some evidence of vulnerability, but for which not enough data exist to support listing.
 CE = commercially exploited.
 E = endangered.

FGFWFC Ranks

- SSC = species of special concern.
 T = threatened.
 T(S/A) = threatened due to similarity of appearance.

TNC Global Ranks

- G1 = globally endangered.
 G2 = globally threatened.
 G3 = globally of concern.
 G4 = globally apparently secure.
 G5 = globally demonstrably secure.
 G#/Q# = questionable species.
 G#/T# = rank of taxonomic subgroup.
 G? = not yet ranked (temporary).

FNAI State Ranks

- S1 = regionally endangered.
 S2 = regionally threatened.
 S3 = regionally of concern.
 S4 = regionally apparently secure.
 S5 = regionally demonstrably secure.
 U = insufficient information available for ranking.

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.

Table 4. Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants of the St. Marys River Basin

Scientific Name	Common Name	TNC	State		USFWS	FGFWFC GA	
		Global Ranking	Ranking	FNAI		Status	Status
Balduina atropurpurea	Purple Balduina	G2G3	S2	S?	3C	N	-
Befaria racemosa	Tarflower	G?	S?	S1?	-	-	-
Calamovilfa curtissii	Sand Grass	G1G2	S1S2	-	C2	CE	-
Ctenium floridanum	Florida Orange Grass	G2Q	S2	S?	3C	N	-
Euphorbia Exserta	Euphorb	G3?	S3?	S?	-	-	-
Hartwrightia floridana	Hartwrightia	G2	S2	S1	C2	CT	T
Hexastylis arifolia	Heartleaf	G5	S3	S?	N	CT	-
Lachnocaulon beyrichianum	Southern Bog-Botton	G2G3	S?	S?	-	-	-
Linum westii	West's Flax	G2	-	C2	CT	-	-
Litsea aestivalis	Pondspice	G4G5	S2	S?	C2	CT	T
Peltandra agittifolia	Soonflower	G3G4	S3	S?	N	N	-
Pycnanthemum floridanum	Florida Mountain-Mint	G3	S3	-	3C	N	-
Rhapidophyllum hystrix	Needle Palm	G3	S?	S?	-	-	-
Rhynchospora punctata	Pineland Beakrush	G1?	AU	S1	C2	N	-
Sarracenia psittacina	Parrot Pitcherplant	G3G5	S2	S?	-	-	T
Salpingostylis coelestina	Bartram's Ixia	G2	S2	-	PE	CE	-
Uvularia floridana	Florida Merrybells	G?	S1	S?	N	N	-
Verbesina heterophylla	Variable-leaf Crowbeard	G2	S2	-	C1	N	-
Veronia puchella	Ironweed	G2G4	S?	S?	-	-	-
Xyris drummondii	Drummond's Yellow-eyed Grass	G3	S2	S?	C2	N	-
Aristida rhizomophora	Florida Threecawn	G2S3	S2S3	-	N	N	-
Asolepias viridula	Southern Threecawn	G2	SL	-	C1	CT	-
Drosera intesmedia	Spoon-leaved Sundew	G5	S3	-	N	CT	-

USFWS Ranks

C1 - candidate for federal listing, with enough substantial information on biological vulnerability and threats to support proposals for listing.

C2 - candidate for listing, with some evidence of vulnerability, but for which not enough data exists to support listing.

CE - commercially exploited.

E - endangered

FGFWFC Ranks

SSC - species of special concern.

T - threatened.

T(S/A) - threatened due to similarity of appearance.

TNC Global Ranks

G1 - globally endangered.

G2 - globally threatened.

G3 - globally of concern.

G4 - globally apparently secure.

G5 - globally demonstrably secure.

G#/Q# - questionable species.

G#/T# - rank of taxonomic subgroup.

G? - not yet ranked (temporary)

FNAI State Ranks

S1 - regionally endangered

S2 - regionally threatened.

S3 - regionally of concern.

S4 - regionally apparently secure.

S5 - regionally demonstrably secure.

U - insufficient information available for rankings.

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.

Recreational Resources

The principal recreational uses of the St. Marys include canoeing, fishing, recreational boating, picnicking, nature study, and hunting. Public lands along the river are limited to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge at the headwaters of the North Prong, Osceola National Forest at the headwaters of the Middle Prong, a Charlton County, Georgia county park at Traders Hill, and the St. Marys Conservation Tract owned by the St. Johns Water Management District.

Canoeing is classified as Class 1 for the entire river although the North Prong has many snags and requires frequent portages. The lower sections are subject to tidal currents and up river winds which could make canoeing difficult. The area between river mile 109.8 near Macclenny and river mile 54.2 near Folkston has been designated as a public canoe trail by the Florida Department of Natural Resources. A popular canoe launch is located at the Florida Highway 121/Georgia Highway 23 bridge crossing at river mile 109.8. Access to the river is considered good via bridge crossings, and a few public or private ramps. Bridge crossings and ramp location are noted in Table 5 (*on the right*).

Opportunities for both picnicking and camping abound due to the large number of white sand points along the middle section of the river, although no facilities exist. Again access is primarily from either bridge crossings or by boat.

Hunting along the St. Marys is confined largely to private preserves and timber lands although the possibility of hunting is under study for St. Johns Water Management District lands.

Fishing is a popular sport on the river and appears to be most active in the Traders Hill area

where the county boat ramp and dock is located. Small powerboats commonly navigate to Traders Hill (river mile 57.8) and to a private landing at river mile 63. The lower St. Marys River, below the study area, is used primarily by shrimp fishermen and tugs towing fuel to St. Marys.

The area is also in fairly close proximity to recreational opportunities at Crooked Creek State Park and Cumberland Island National Seashore in Georgia; and Ft. Clinch State Park on the north end of Amelia Island, Florida

Table 5.

CROSSINGS AND BUILT FEATURES FOR RECREATIONAL ACCESS

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
Headwaters of N. Prong to Confluence with Middle Prong		
Bridge	Dirt road	RM 123.5
Bridge	Paved Highway 94	Moniac, GA
Bridge	Southern Railroad crossing	Moniac, GA
Bridge	Dirt road	North of Baker Branch, RM 116.5
Between Middle Prong and South Prong		
Bridge	Paved GA SR 121/23	RM 104.5
Downstream of South Prong Confluence		
Boat Ramp	Paved ramp on Fl. side	RM 99.5
Bridge	Dirt road to Stakesville, GA	RM 96
Bridge	Southern Railroad crossing	RM 94
Boat Ramp	Paved ramp at U.S. 94	RM 83.5
Bridge	Paved U.S. Hwy 94	Rm 83.5
Ramp/Dock	County park at Traders Hill	RM 58
Bridge	Seaboard Coast Line Railroad crossing	RM 57
Utility Line	Overhead crossing	RM 56
Bridge	U.S. 301/FL SR 15	RM 55.5
Boat Ramp	Paved ramp	RM 55
Boat Ramp	Private paved ramp	RM 43.5
Bridge	Seaboard Coast Line adj. to U.S. 17	RM 26.5
Bridge	U.S. 17 RM 26.5 Bridge I-95	RM 21.5

Cultural Resources

The St. Marys River corridor has not been formally surveyed for historic or archaeological value. However, there are numerous known significant sites in the areas adjacent to the study area. Fort Tonym at river mile 5 functions as a reminder of the short period of British colonial rule in Florida from 1763 to 1783.

The Mulberry Landing artifact scatter, representative of the St. Johns Indian culture, reaches back to Florida's prehistoric days.

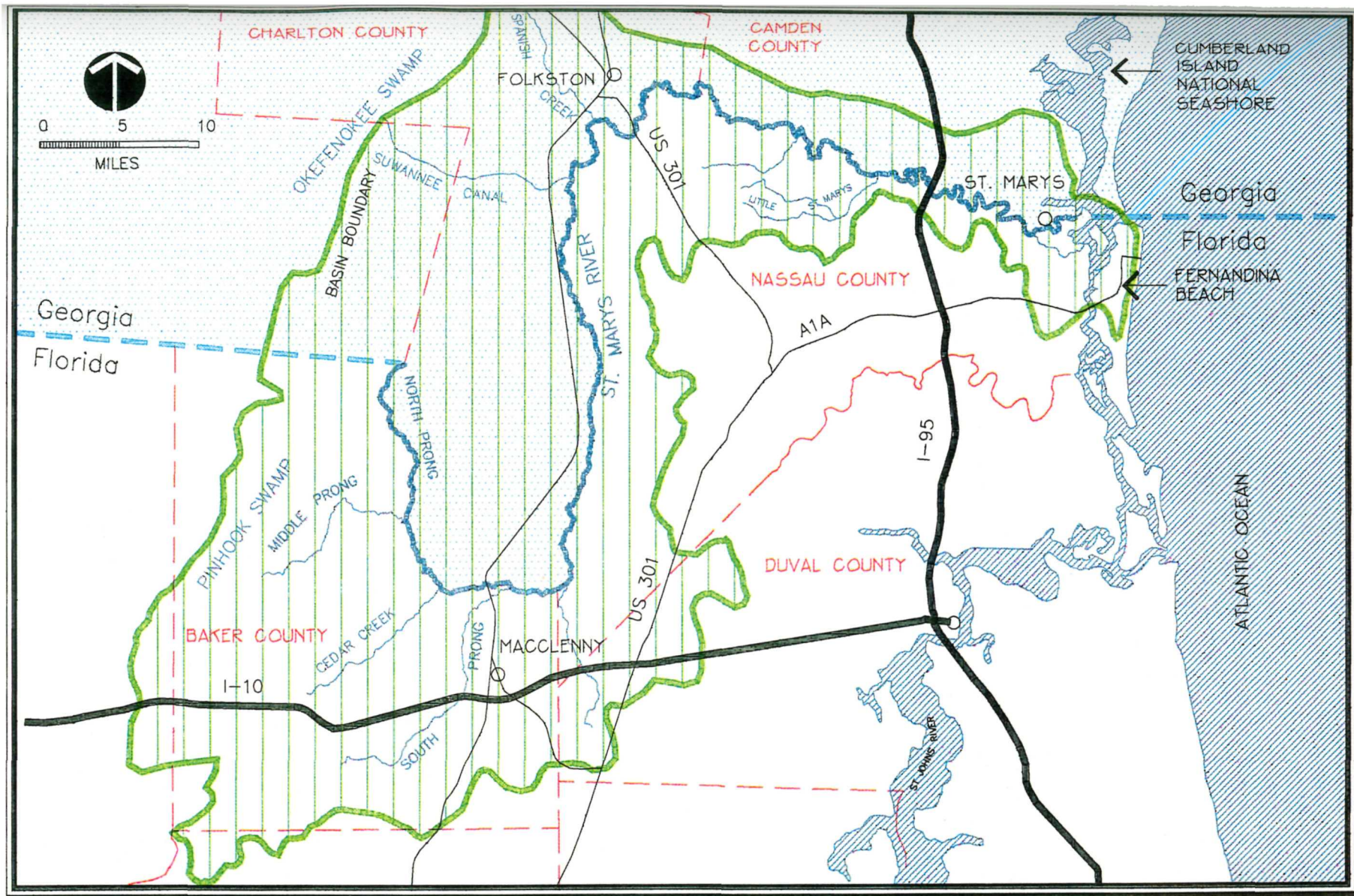
The colonial Spanish established missions in the vicinity of the St. Marys River in the 17th century, including one discovered on Amelia Island. In 1812, an American invasion force crossed the river into Spanish territory and occupied Fernandina, proclaiming it part of the United States, only to have the action disavowed by the American government and returning the area to the Spanish.

The St. Marys River and the town of Fernandina were long associated with pirates and other disreputable elements of southern colonial history. Nearby Fort Clinch State Park and the Fernandina Beach Historic District provide places of historical interest close to the river corridor.

The river has historically been used as a way station for the replenishing of fresh water

stores for seagoing ships. Its use for commercial purposes dates back to between 1868 and 1870 when two small freight steamers made regular trips to Traders Hill. A coastline trader is also known to have made trips to Traders Hill in 1874. Boats requiring only 3 feet of draft have operated as far upstream as Stanley Landing at river mile 62 while passenger and freight boats were making regularly scheduled trips between Fernandina, Florida and Orange Bluff at river mile 52. Barge traffic was able to operate up to Camp Pickney which is about 14 miles upstream of Kings Ferry. By 1932, over 5,000 tons of logs and crossties were estimated to have been rafted down the river from the vicinity of Traders Hill.

Today the river is utilized mostly for recreational purposes with commercial activity limited to shrimp boats and small commercial boats in the lower reaches around St. Marys.



ST. MARYS RIVER BASIN

ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH



BASIN AREA



V. SUMMARY OF EXISTING PROTECTION

V. SUMMARY OF EXISTING PROTECTION

The St. Marys River forms the border of two states, Florida and Georgia, lies within two U.S. Army Corp of Engineers districts, and within four counties, two in Florida and two in Georgia. The result is varied and piecemealed sets of regulations for river protection. Florida through its Warren S. Henderson Wetlands Protection Act and Comprehensive Growth Management Act addresses wetland and river protection whereas Georgia only regulates coastal marshlands. While all of the federal, state, regional and local regulations help protect the St. Marys River basin, specific coordinated regulations designed to protect the basin as an whole system are not present. State and local agencies responsible for land use impacts are listed in Table 6, Page 51 and 52.

Federal Programs and Lands

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is charged with regulating waters of the United States. By definition these waters include coastal and navigable inland waters, lakes, rivers and streams; other intrastate lakes, rivers and streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, wet meadows, and certain impoundments.

Typical activities that would require permitting by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers include the following:

- construction of structures such as piers, wharves, docks, dockhouses, boat hoists, boathouses, floats, marinas, boat ramps, marine railways, and bulkheads
- construction of revetment, groins, breakwaters, levees, dams, dikes, berms, weirs, and outfall structures
- placement of wires, cables or pipes in or above the water

- dredging, excavation and depositing of fill and dredged material
- construction of fill roads and placement of riprap

The authority the USACE has over construction of small docks, piers, moorings, and platforms comes from the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10. Typically these activities are permitted as either Letters of Permission or General Permits. **If an activity is covered by a general permit, an application to the USACE is not required. A person utilizing a general permit must only comply with the specific requirements stated of that permit.**

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. **Silviculture activities such as plowing, seeding, cultivating, minor drainage, and harvesting for the production of forest products are specifically exempted from the requirements under Section 404.**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is also required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if an endangered species may be impacted by an activity. The USFWS prepares a separate biological opinion and the activity may not be authorized unless it is determined that the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species or result in the destruction of the habitat of the species.

Due to its location in two states and the district boundaries within the Army Corps of Engineers the St. Marys River is split into two districts. Responsibilities for administration of waters within Georgia lies in the Savannah

district office while the Jacksonville, Florida district office handles Florida administration. Federal lands within the basin include the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge and the Osceola National Forest. All plants and animals are protected within the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, whereas the Osceola National Forest management focuses on timber production and Type 1 wildlife management.

State Programs and Lands

Florida - Construction in, on or over waters of the state of Florida and in estuarine areas are regulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the five state water management districts.

The St. Marys River basin within Florida falls entirely within the St. Johns River Water Management District. Under the Warren S. Henderson Wetlands Protection Act of 1984 regulatory authority was given to the State Department of Environmental Regulation (now DEP) but much of the permitting authority has been delegated to the water management districts.

Permits are required for construction of such items as jetties, breakwaters, revetments, marinas, docks, wharves, piers, marine railroads, walkways, mooring structures, boat ramps, canals, locks, bridges, causeways and any dredging and filling. **Minor activities such as private docks of limited size, maintenance dredging, certain boat ramps, and construction of seawalls and revetments in limited situations are exempted.**

A project may not cause violations of water quality standards and in some cases may not cause degradation of the water quality itself. The project must also be found to be clearly in or not contrary to the public interest. The public interest criteria as per Section 403.918, F.S. require consideration of:

1. Public health, safety or welfare and the property of others
2. Conservation of fish and wildlife, threatened or endangered species or their habitats
3. Navigation, flow of water, erosion, or shoaling
4. Fishing, recreational values and marine productivity
5. Whether the impacts of the project will be temporary or permanent
6. Historic and archaeological resources
7. Current condition and relative value of functions being performed by areas affected by the proposed activity

Scenic values per se are not considered public interest criteria.

Under the Warren S. Henderson Wetlands Protection Act **normal and customary agricultural and silviculture operations are exempted from permitting requirements.**

On a regional basis Florida has created 11 Regional Planning Councils. The majority of the St. Marys River basin lies within the Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council's jurisdiction. This council establishes goals and policies that influence and direct land uses within its boundaries. Goals within its policies state:

Goal 8.3.3: By 1995, significant wetlands should be protected through a coordinated management plan by Federal, State, regional and local governments.

Goal 10: Natural Systems and Recreational Land - Florida shall protect and acquire natural habitats and natural systems such as wetlands, tropical hardwood hammocks, palm hammocks, and virgin longleaf pine forests, and restore degraded natural systems to a functional condition.

St. Johns Water Management District owned lands consist of the St. Marys Conservation Area which adjoins the St. Marys River and contains approximately 3,630 acres. It is managed as a Type II Wildlife Management Area with enforcement assistance from the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.

Georgia - Georgia's wetland regulatory program is restricted to the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 and addresses coastal marshlands exclusively. This limits the application within the St. Marys basin to the salt marshes within Camden County with **no state protection for the St. Marys River corridor.**

The 1989 Comprehensive Planning Act mandates comprehensive planning at the local, regional, and state level, and requires the identification and nomination of regionally important resources. Standards set forth in the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria deal with water supply watershed, groundwater recharge areas and wetland protection. The Georgia Mountains and River Corridors Protection Act authorizes the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to set minimum planning standards and procedures for protection of river corridors in the state. This requires a 100 horizontal foot buffer of natural vegetation on both sides of a river. **The state can not prohibit the building of single- family dwelling units within the vegetative buffer area, subject to the following conditions:**

1. Building must be in compliance with local regulations
2. The dwelling unit must be located on a tract of land containing at least two acres
3. Only one dwelling unit may be built on each tract
4. Septic tanks serving the dwelling unit may be located within the buffer area, but the septic tank drainfields may not be located within the buffer

Construction within the buffer area must meet Erosion and Sedimentation Act requirements and forestry/agriculture activities may not impair drinking water standards as per the Clean Water Act.

Georgia has created 18 Regional Development Centers (RDCs). They have the responsibility of serving the essential public interests of the state by promoting the establishment, implementation, and performance of coordinated and comprehensive planning by municipal and county governments and RDC. This planning must be in conformity with the minimum standards and procedures established pursuant to the Comprehensive Planning Act. The St. Marys River basin is served by two regional development centers. The Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center serves Charlton and Ware Counties and the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center serves Camden County.

Local Land Use, Zoning, and Comprehensive Planning

Florida - Baker County

Land use regulations for Baker County include the comprehensive plan, zoning code, and land development regulations. Some of the relevant goals and policies include:

Land use in flood prone areas shall be limited to low density residential with the use of septic tanks subject to FEMA and County Health regulations.

A 50 foot buffer of native vegetation shall be required for developments located adjacent to wetlands.

Riverfront and lakefront development shall be designed so as not to affect the water quality of adjacent waters. A 20 foot vegetative buffer is required between the building site and the water body.

The County shall, through available state and federal programs, promote the acquisition of floodplains along the St. Marys River.

If no feasible alternative exists, needed transportation facility improvements may transverse areas that are environmentally and/or aesthetically sensitive; however, such areas should be limited and design techniques should be used to minimize the negative impact upon the natural and community system.

Florida - Nassau County

Nassau County regulations include the comprehensive plan, zoning code, development regulations, and applicable goals and policies. Some of the relevant goals and policies include:

Protect estuaries by prohibiting sanitary sewer wastewater and stormwater discharge into Class II waters.

Criteria shall be included in the Land Development Regulations to include requirements to preserve/replace the natural/native vegetation along county waterways to maintain the natural beauty of the area, to control erosion and retard runoff.

In the case of forested wetlands consisting of cypress, hardwood swamps, bay swamps, bottomland hardwoods, implement the following management practices: (1) maintenance of overall wetland community integrity and (2) the use of select cuts, or small clearcuts, performed in a manner which does not significantly alter overall wetland community characteristics.

In order to protect the functional viability and productivity of forested wetland systems as natural resources, silviculture activities within forested wetlands (1) shall not significantly alter overall wetland community characteristics and (2) shall not result in the conversion of existing forested wetlands into either upland systems or other types of wetland systems, except pursuant to restorative silvicultural activities; and shall only be undertaken on those portions of the forested wetlands site on which there is no standing water.

Nassau County has established buffers for wetlands and provided setbacks for all septic tanks from water bodies.

While both Baker and Nassau Counties have implemented requirements to protect natural resources such as the St. Marys, **neither county has taken measures to specifically protect the St. Marys River basin.**

Georgia - Camden County

Camden County has a joint comprehensive plan including Camden County, Kingsland, St. Marys, and Woodbine. This was completed in April 1992 and has since been adopted.

The St. Marys River is mentioned briefly in the natural resource element but it **does not identify the river as a Regionally Important Resource or identify any policies to protect the river.**

Georgia - Charlton County

Charlton County's comprehensive plan is not as yet complete. Currently there are no zoning or land development regulations. **The county does not officially recognize the river basin as an important resource and has no protective measures in place.**

Table 6. Agencies, Responsibilities, and Legislation that Impact Land Use in the St. Marys River Basin
(Page 2 of 2)

Agency	Land Use Responsibility	Authorizing Legislation
<u>Georgia</u> (continued)		
DNR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review comprehensive plans 2. Develop minimum planning criteria with respect to critical watershed wetlands and aquifer recharge 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1989 Comprehensive Planning Act 2. Ch. 12-2-8 OCGA Rule Ch. 391-3-16
RDC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review comprehensive plans 2. Identify regional important resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1989 Comprehensive Planning Act Rule Ch. 110-3-2 2. 1989 Comprehensive Planning Act Rule Ch. 110-3-2

Source: SJRWMD, 1992.

Table 6. Agencies, Responsibilities, and Legislation that Impact Land Use in the St. Marys River Basin
(Page 1 of 2)

Agency	Land Use Responsibility	Authorizing Legislation
<u>Florida</u>		
Counties and Municipalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop comprehensive plans and land development regulations 2. Review and approve DRI 3. Develop zoning and local ordinances 4. Issue local permits 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 163 FS, (J-5, 9J-24 FAC 2. Ch. 380
DCA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and approve comprehensive plans and land development regulations. 2. DRI Administration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 163 FS, 9J-5, 9J-24 FAC 2. Ch. 380 FS
DNR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permitting agency 2. DRI review 3. Comprehensive plan review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title 16, FAC 2. Ch. 380 FS 3. Ch. 163 FS
DER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permitting agency 2. DRI review 3. Comprehensive plan review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 373, 403 FS, Title 17, FAC 2. Ch. 380 FS 3. Ch. 163 FS
WMD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water permitting agency 2. DRI review 3. Comprehensive plan review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 373, 403 FS; 40C-2, 40C-4, FAC
RPC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead agency in DRI review 2. Review local comprehensive plans 3. Develop regional comprehensive plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 186 FS Ch. 380 FS 2. Ch. 163 FS 3. Ch. 380 FS
FGFWFC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DRI Review 2. Comprehensive Plan Review 3. Commenting Agency 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ch. 380 FS 2. Ch. 380 FS
<u>Georgia</u>		
Counties and Municipalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop comprehensive plans 2. Develop land use regulations, zoning ordinances. (optional) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1989 Comprehensive Planning Act Rule Ch. 110-3-2
DCA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review comprehensive plans 2. Assist state in long term planning goals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>1989 Comprehensive Planning Act</u>, House Bill 215, 50-8-1 OCGA. Rule Ch. 110-3-2 2. <u>1989 Comprehensive Planning Act</u>, House Bill 215, 50-8-1 OCGA. Rule Ch. 110-3-2

Voluntary Private Landowner Protection

There are a number of private and corporate landowners who voluntarily maintain portions of their land as natural preserves. There are, however, no known land conservation easements. Gilman Paper Company's White Oak Plantation is adjacent to the St. Marys River for several miles and contains approximately 8,000 acres. It includes a nature preserve, timberlands, a racehorse breeding farm, a ballet center, a golf course, and facilities for the raising and studying of exotic and endangered animals.

The largest land use within the St. Marys River basin is silviculture. It is considered the primary management objective by private landowners. Timbering has been practiced in the area since the early 1900's and only remnants of old growth forests remain. The majority of the pine lands are third or fourth generation stands.

Both Florida and Georgia have established best management practices for silviculture. These are non-regulatory guidelines but are applied as performance standards by timber managers in order to comply with other regulatory programs.

Special consideration is given to streamside management zones in both states. Florida has established three management zones including:

1. Primary Stream Management Zone (PSMZ)

- fixed at 35' outward from the stream or body of water
- allows selective timbering that leaves a volume equal to or greater than one half the volume of a fully stocked stand

- avoids mechanical site preparation, fertilization, and aerial application of herbicides and insecticides

2. Secondary Stream Management Zone

- variable width of 10 to 105 feet outside of the PSMZ
- allows complete timber harvesting
- avoids mechanical site preparation, fertilization, and aerial applications of herbicides and insecticides

3. Discretionary Zone

- the area from the outside of the Secondary Stream Management Zone to 300 feet outside of the waterway

Georgia has established two management zones including:

1. Primary Stream Management Zone

- fixed at 20' outward from the stream - any type of cutting practice allowed
- discourages roads or trail, unless necessary, portable sawmills and log decks, harrowing, root raking or bulldozing, gully leveling, unless immediately seeded and mulched, and leaving logging debris in the waterbody

2. Secondary Stream Management Zone

- no secondary stream management zone recommended in this area

Silviculture activity within the basin can be categorized by management practices as either industrial or non-industrial ownership.

Non-industrial owners for the most part are producing saw timber. Selective harvesting, utilization of natural regeneration techniques, and long term stand rotation are typical. These timberlands tend to maintain their natural integrity and provide habitat for rare and endangered species. Due to the typical lack of proper equipment and resources, best management practices (BMP) have a greater

incidence of noncompliance than the industrial owned lands.

Industrial owners are typically growing pulpwood and harvest stands between 20 and 30 years of age. Replanting is by mechanical means and includes chopping, KG-blading, and bedding. Tree density, lack of fire, and mechanical site preparation virtually eliminate natural groundcover and native habitat.

Compliance to best management practices has been found to be high. Both states' Division of Forestry review performance on a biennial basis. If the surveys find that BMPs are not being practiced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can recommend a permitting program be instituted.

Overall Corridor Protection

The St. Marys River basin has many resource protection programs currently in effect which vary widely between Florida and Georgia. Wetland protection in Florida is regulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation and the St. Johns River Water Management District. In Georgia only coastal wetlands are regulated, leaving the majority of the river on the Georgia side unprotected.

Land use regulations in both states address development densities adjacent to the river and associated wetlands. The comprehensive plans within Florida are more developed having been in place longer than those in Georgia.

Not one, however, of the county comprehensive plans addresses the St. Marys River basin as a regionally significant resource or specifically gives protection to the river. The Georgia Mountains and Rivers Corridor Protection Act establishes vegetative buffers along the river, but cannot prohibit residential development within those buffers.

Federal regulation is split between the Savannah and Jacksonville offices of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, making coordination of the resource more difficult than under one district. In addition many of the current regulations, both Federal and State, exempt activities and structures associated with developing single-family homesites. The cumulative impacts of increases in recreation and weekend homesites could threaten water quality, create conflicts among river users, and significantly alter the scenic character of the river. Silviculture activities have the potential to greatly affect water and scenic qualities of the river. High compliance with best management practices must be maintained and setbacks are needed, especially where uplands are immediately adjacent to the river. The high water quality in large part can be attributed to the large land holdings and the undisturbed state of most of the riverbank.

Even though the St. Marys River Basin has numerous resource protection programs there are large gaps within them and there is no formal coordination mechanism for the programs. Current programs are summarized in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. Resource Protection Programs Available in Florida and Georgia

Protection Program	Governmental Protection Level	
	Florida	Georgia
Wetland Regulations	Federal, State	Federal, State (only in coastal marshes)
Water Quality Standards	State	State
Water Use Classification System	State	State
Antidegradation Policies	State	State
Special Surface Water Designations	State	State
NPDES Permitting	Federal	State
Water Body Restoration Programs	State (FDER SWIM program)	None
Consumptive Use Permits	State (SJRWMD)	State (GDNR)
Stormwater Regulations	State (SJRWMD)	None
Surface Water Management Regulations	State (SJRWMD)	None
Corridor Designation	None	State, Local (Counties)
Growth Management	Counties, State	Counties, State
Land Acquisition	State (CARL, SOR)	State (P-2000)
Endangered Species	Federal, State	Federal, State

SWIM = Surface Water Improvement and Management

CARL = Conservation and Recreation Lands

SOR = Save Our Rivers

Table 8. Regulation of Wetland Alteration Activities (Dredge and Fill)

Agency	Regulation	Applicability to Land Uses		
		Silviculture	Agriculture	Urban/Industrial
<u>Federal</u>				
USACE ^a	Dredge and Fill			
	Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 ^b Sections 9 and 10	NA	NA	Applies
	Clean Water Act, Section 404 ^c (33 CFR Parts 320-330)	Exempt ^d	Exempt ^d	Applies
	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1956 ^e			
	Endangered Species Act of 1973 ^f			
<u>State of Florida</u>				
FDER/ SJRWMD ^g	Dredge and Fill			
	Warren S. Henderson Wetlands Protection Act of 1984 (403.92-.938, FS)	Exempt ^h	Exempt ^h	Applies
SJRWMD	Management and Storage of Surface Waters (Ch. 40C-4, Ch. 40C-40, and Ch. 40C-41, F.A.C., Sec 403, FS)	Exempt ⁱ	Exempt ⁱ	Applies
<u>State of Georgia</u>				
GDNR	Dredge and Fill	NA	NA	Applies
	Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 ^k (GA Code 12-5-280 <i>et seq.</i>)			
	Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973 ^l (GA Code 27-3-130 <i>et seq.</i>)			

^a Jacksonville District in Florida, Savannah District in Georgia.

^b Prohibit unauthorized construction in or over navigable waters of the United States.

^c Governs discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

^d 33 CFR Part 232.4(a). Exemption applies to established (i.e., on-going) farming, silviculture, or ranching operations. Activities which bring an area into farming, silviculture, or ranching use are not able to use the exemption.

^e Requires USACE to coordinate permit applications with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies.

^f For protection of endangered or threatened species.

^g Certain aspects of program delegated by FDER to SJRWMD.

^h Chapter 403.927, Florida Statutes: Exemption includes all necessary farming and forestry operations which are nominal and customary for an area, such as site preparation, clearing, fencing, contouring to prevent soil erosion, soil preparation, plowing planting, harvesting, construction of access roads, and placement of bridges and culverts, provided such operations do not impede or divert the flow of surface waters.

ⁱ Some activities are exempt; others require notice permits or general permits.

^j Closed systems are exempt; other exemptions may also apply.

^k Within the St. Marys Basin, applies only to salt marshes with Camden County.

^l Private lands are exempt and is not to impede construction in any way.



VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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The study process for the St. Marys River began in January, 1991 with the evaluation of the river's natural resources. Since that time four public meetings have been held, one in each of the adjacent counties, to introduce the study.

Two of these meetings were held February 26 and 27, 1991 in the towns of Kingsland and Folkston, Georgia. The two meetings drew a total of 106 people with diverse representation including landowners, industry, public officials, citizens, Congressional staff, and conservation organizations. Comments presented indicated that the majority of attendees were not in favor of federal designation and management of the river; however, there was interest in protecting and preserving the river at a **local level**. Major concerns included:

- Federal acquisition of private land
- Increased Federal control over existing land uses
- Erosion of the local tax base if additional lands are placed in public ownership
- Local citizens feel that their views will not be taken into consideration by the study team nor reflected in the study findings

The second set of meeting was held in Macclenny and Yulee, Florida on the evenings of April 29 and 30, 1991. A total of 97 people attended these meetings and again the representation was diverse including landowners, industry, public officials, citizens, media and conservation organizations. Comments presented at the Macclenny meeting were similar to the earlier meetings in Kingsland and Folkston, Georgia. The majority of attendees were not in favor of federal designation and management of the river; however, interest in protecting and preserving the river at the **local level** was voiced. The Yulee meeting, attended by approximately 60 people, was predominantly favorable to-

ward wild and scenic recognition for the St. Marys River and several attendees voiced concerns over the ability of local entities to adequately protect the river. The combined major concerns expressed at these meetings included:

- Federal acquisition of private lands
- Increased Federal control over existing land uses
- Degradation of the river's values without some form of long term protection
- Local citizens feel that their views will not be taken into consideration by the study team nor reflected in the study findings

A brochure describing The Wild and Scenic River Act and answering typical questions regarding its impact and meaning was distributed at all four of these meetings and a mailing list compiled of the attendees. (See Appendix B)

In addition to the initial county meetings, the County Commission Chairman in each of the four study area counties was asked in August, 1991 to suggest representatives to serve on a study advisory group to assist the study team. The County Commissions created the St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC) to explore local river protection options. The committee held its first meeting in November 1991 and has concentrated on local management issues and alternatives to Wild & Scenic River designation and never accepted the role of the Wild and Scenic River Advisory Committee.

A second local citizens group, Friends of St. Marys, was formed in January 1992 by environmental interests in south Georgia and North Florida. Their sole purpose was promoting National Wild and Scenic River designation for the St. Marys River.

Representatives of the National Park Service have attended meetings of both organizations on a regular basis.

In September, 1991 the National Park Service issued the St. Marys River Study - Preliminary Eligibility Determination (See Appendix C). This was distributed to all the attendees of the

four county meetings, county commissioners, local elected officials, members of the St. Marys River Management Committee, local and regional media, Friends of the St. Marys, local Congresspersons, interested Federal agencies, St. Johns River Water Management District, and citizens that had expressed an interest in the study.



VII. ALTERNATIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

VII. ALTERNATIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Alternative A - No Action/Existing Trends

Discussion: This alternative characterizes the future conditions expected in the study area without a formal management plan or designation as a wild and scenic river. Sections of the St. Marys River are clearly eligible to be a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the river is an excellent example of Southern blackwater rivers. The river landowners, for the most part, have done an excellent job of preserving the rivers outstanding scenic, natural, and recreational characteristics. This has been due in large part to the large tract ownership along much of the river, the rivers distance to major population centers, and the low population densities in the adjacent counties.

The rural character and silviculture land uses are expected to continue in the area but significant urban expansion is projected to continue in the St. Marys - Kingsland area of Camden County, Georgia. This is anticipated as a result of the continued growth of the Kings Bay Naval Base. Moderate growth is projected to continue in eastern Nassau County, Florida in the vicinity of Yulee and Fernandina Beach. Both Baker County, Florida and Charlton County, Georgia projections show little population increase.

While counties in both Georgia and Florida are required to have comprehensive land use plans, none of the counties recognize the St. Marys River and its basin as a resource of regional significance. Silviculture management practices for protection of banks and immediately adjacent lands have had very high compliance but are purely voluntary. Most significantly, the majority of local, state and federal

regulations regarding development along the river and within prescribed buffer areas exempt single residential development from much of the permitting process. Only water quality issues relating to location of septic tanks is really addressed. There is no coordinated effort among the many existing regulatory authorities for river protection.

Conclusion: Due to the projected increase in development pressures there is a very strong need for coordination and some consistency among the many local, regional, state, and federal authorities currently involved in protection of the St. Marys River.

Alternative B - Congressional designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River as a national wild and scenic river with National Park Service management

Discussion: In this alternative Congress would amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River as a national wild and scenic river. The National Park Service would prepare a comprehensive management plan and a land protection plan following designation. These plans would guide the NPS management of the St. Marys River in a manner similar to other National Park System units, and consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This alternative is widely and strongly opposed by many area citizens and landowners. A need for river protection was expressed by local citizens and landowners, but they felt it could be better handled at the local level. Federal budgetary constraints have also imposed severe limitations on Federal parkland acquisition and operational funds.

Conclusion: Although the St. Marys River is eligible for designation, local concerns and opposition to federal acquisition of private lands and the resulting loss of local tax base, increased federal control over existing land uses, and decreased local access to the river make this alternative infeasible.

**Alternative C -
Secretary of the Interior designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River within the States of Florida and Georgia with cooperative management between Florida and Georgia**

Discussion: Under this alternative designation of any portion of the St. Marys River by the Secretary of the Interior requires that the river be a designated component of an existing state rivers system. Both Florida and Georgia have such systems. In addition, the Governors of both Georgia and Florida would be required to submit their proposed management plans for protection of the river's natural values when requesting national designation. If the Secretary feels the proposed state management plans will protect the river in a manner consistent with the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, he can designate the river into the national system. Management of the river would most likely be handled by Georgia's and Florida's departments of natural resources. This alternative has the beneficial effect of coordinating management of the river between the two states.

Conclusion: While this alternative coordinates efforts between Georgia and Florida and puts management of the river in state control, it does not address local citizen and landowner's interest to protect and preserve the river at the local level.

**Alternative D -
Congressional designation of all or part of the eligible portion of the St. Marys River with special legislation establishing a local river management council**

Discussion: Utilizing this alternative Congress would amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the St. Marys River, and in the same legislation create a local river management council. The NPS would be authorized to provide financial and technical assistance to the council. The council would be responsible for the management of all non-Federal lands within the designated river corridor, consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Under this alternative the NPS could provide funds to the local river management council to hire consultants to assist them in preparing the river management plan. The membership of the council could be structured to represent local landowners and commercial interests, local government, state government, St. Johns River Water Management District, National Park Service, recreational interests, and local and national conservation organizations. Local influence in the development and implementation of the plan would be clearly mandated. Extensive local participation would make it possible to develop a plan and guidelines that addresses the concerns of area residents while satisfying the national interest. These guidelines could include provisions such as:

1. Retaining local control of the river corridor through the establishment of a river management council; the council having primary responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the plan
2. Protection against over-regulation by coordination of existing local, state, and federal laws to protect the river

3. Any future land acquisition would be driven by the locally developed management plan
4. Development of guidelines to ensure continuation of such traditional activities as recreation, hunting, fishing, trapping, timbering, and agriculture
5. Providing counties and towns with alternatives and flexibility allowing them to meet guidelines in their own way

Conclusion: This alternative will not satisfy all local opposition to federal involvement. It does, however, provide a mechanism to meet the expressed local desire for local control, river protection and river preservation. It provides the means for effective coordination of regulations and local management of the St. Marys River. It is this agency's preferred alternative.



VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of this environmental assessment is to analyze alternatives considered in the St. Marys River Wild and Scenic River Study and to ensure all reasonable options were explored. The alternatives and associated environmental impacts are listed in Table 9, Page 71 and 72. This table is intended to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species

Act, and various other laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies.

The contents of this environmental assessment should provide sufficient information for responsible officials to determine the need for an environmental impact statement on actions which would result from selection of any alternative considered by this study.

TABLE 6.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE A - No Action/Existing Trends

ALTERNATIVE B - Congressional Designation/National Park Service Management

ALTERNATIVE C - Secretary of the Interior Designation/Cooperative State Management

ALTERNATIVE D - Congressional Designation/Local River Management Council

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

The river would not be designated a wild and scenic river. No comprehensive management plan would be prepared; however, the St. Marys River Management Committee established by interlocal agreement between the four counties adjacent to the river would serve to coordinate county management efforts.

All or portions of the river would be designated as a national wild and scenic river. The NPS would prepare a comprehensive management plan consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

All or part of the river would be designated as a national wild and scenic river and a component of an existing state river system by the Secretary of the Interior. Both Florida and Georgia have such systems. The Governor of both states would be required to submit management plans at the time of request for national designation. If the Secretary feels the management plans are consistent with the National Wild and Scenic River Act he would designate the river into the national system.

Congress would amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the river and create a local river management council. The NPS would be authorized to provide financial and technical assistance to the council. The council would be responsible for the management of all non-Federal lands within the designated corridor, consistent with the requirements of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

IMPACTS ON CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The St. Marys River corridor has not been nor is currently being surveyed for historic or archeological sites. There are, however, numerous known sites adjacent to the study area. Continued development along the river, especially small scale projects without the higher levels of permitting and review required of larger developments, could destroy important historic and archaeological remnants. There is no current trend towards requiring archaeological review of individual residential sites prior to construction in either state at the state or local level. The overall cultural impacts of this alternative would be negative

The NPS would address historical, archeological, and other cultural resources as part of its river management plan. Through long term NPS administration and comprehensive management of the river additional archeological research could be encouraged. Protection and interpretation of sites which might be found in the future would increase the knowledge of the cultures and history of the peoples that have lived along the river. Overall cultural impacts of this alternative should be positive.

Impacts of this alternative would be very similar to those of Alternative B except that the management plan would be developed and administered by the states of Georgia and Florida. Specific requirements for identification of cultural resources would be included within this management plan and coordinated between the two states.

Impacts of this alternative are very similar to those of Alternative B and Alternative C except that the management plan would be developed and managed by a local river management council. The NPS could be authorized by the designating legislation to provide financial and technical assistance. Studies would be undertaken to identify archeological, historical, or otherwise culturally important sites within the management area. This alternative could provide the largest pool of funding sources of all the alternatives by utilizing private, state, and federal resources.

Table 6. (cont.)

ALTERNATIVE A - No Action/Existing Trends

IMPACTS ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmental protection of the river corridor will continue to rely on the many separate local, state, and federal agencies currently having jurisdiction. There would continue to be no coordinated management between entities. Based upon current land use patterns lands directly adjacent to the river will continue to be developed in single family residential. Potential effects include destruction of upland buffers, decreased bank stabilization, increased runoff volume, potential water quality degradation, and destruction of the high aesthetic quality of the river. Docks allowed under blanket permits will continue to increase. Based upon past compliance records, voluntary best management practices for silviculture will continue to be highly used. The threat of loss of the river's aesthetic quality from clear cutting will continue due to lack of required buffers. Overall continuing impacts from this alternatives would negatively affect the river and adjacent corridor.

IMPACTS ON SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Alternative A does not provide Federal designation of the river and existing socioeconomic trends are expected to continue. Based upon past growth patterns this would result in increased residential development adjacent to the river. This could include high density mobile home developments such as at Flea Hill, second homes, weekend cabins, and other single family residential. Silviculture practices would continue adjacent to the river.

ALTERNATIVE B - Congressional Designation/National Park Service Management

Environmental issues for the designated river corridor would be studied and managed by the National Park Service. Environmental protection measures could include fee title land acquisition to average no more than 100 acres per mile of both sides of the river and/or conservation easements. Environmental impacts on the river would be decreased under this alternative through coordinated management of the river and the adjacent corridor.

Federal designation with NPS management could result in minor loss of local tax base due to possible Federal acquisition of lands adjacent to the river. Lands potentially taken out of silviculture production would be minor and no discernable loss to the overall local economy is foreseen. Designation as a wild and scenic river would enhance visibility for recreational use but the incremental increase of impacts attributable to the designation is anticipated to be minimal.

ALTERNATIVE C - Secretary of the Interior Designation/Cooperative State Management

The states of Florida and Georgia would be responsible for river management under state rivers programs. This is similar to Alternative B in that there would be coordinated management. The Federal government would not be involved in land acquisition. Overall impacts on the natural environment would be positive.

Socioeconomic impacts of Federal designation with cooperative state management are similar to those of Alternative B. The Federal government would not, however, be involved in land acquisition. Highly unique areas or areas of special or critical concern could be purchased by either Florida or Georgia through existing state land conservation programs such as Preservation 2000.

ALTERNATIVE D - Congressional Designation/Local River Management Council

Under this alternative a local river management council would be responsible for developing a comprehensive river management plan. The overall impacts on the natural environment are similar to those of Alternative B and Alternative C. Overall impacts on the natural environment would be positive.

Federal designation with management by a local river management council would have overall socioeconomic impacts similar to those in Alternative B and Alternative C. There is the potential for greater positive impacts in this alternative because management decisions are made at the local level. A better understanding of local issues and concerns would allow more appropriate and responsive decisions to be made which would both protect the resource and support economic growth.



IX. LIST OF PREPARERS AND PARTICIPANTS

VII. LIST OF PREPARERS AND PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

Table A-1. Fishes of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 1 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	Sea Lamprey
<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i> ^a	Shortnose Sturgeon
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i> ^a	Atlantic Sturgeon
<i>Lepisosteus osseus</i>	Longnose Gar
<i>Lepisosteus platyrhincus</i> ^a	Florida Gar
<i>Amia calva</i>	Bowfin
<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>	American Eel
<i>Alosa aestivalis</i>	Bluejack Herring
<i>Alosa sapidissima</i>	American Shad
<i>Umbra pygmaea</i> ^a	Eastern mudminnow
<i>Esox americanus</i>	Redfin Pickerel
<i>Esox niger</i>	Chain Pickerel
<i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i>	Golden shiner
<i>Notrois sp.</i>	Shiner Sp.
<i>Notropis chalybaeus</i>	Ironcolor Shiner
<i>Notropis emiliae</i> ^a	Pugnose Minnow
<i>Notropis hypselopterus</i>	Shellfin Shiner
<i>Notropis maculatus</i>	Taillight Shiner
<i>Notropis petersoni</i>	Coastal Shiner
<i>Erimyzon sucetta</i>	Lake Chubsucker
<i>Minytrema melanops</i>	Spotted Sucker
<i>Ictalurus catus</i>	White Catfish
<i>Ictalurus natalis</i>	Yellow Bullhead
<i>Ictalurus nebulosus</i>	Brown Bullhead
<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>	Channel Catfish
<i>Noturus gyrinus</i>	Tadpole Madtom
<i>Noturus leptacanthus</i>	Speckled Madtom
<i>Aphredoderus sayanus</i>	Pirate Perch
<i>Strongylura marina</i>	Atlantic Needlefish
<i>Cyprinodon variegatus</i>	Sheephead Minnow
<i>Fundulus chrysotus</i> ^a	Golden Topminnow
<i>Fundulus cingulatus</i> ^a	Banded Topminnow
<i>Fundulus lineolatus</i>	Lined Topminnow
<i>Leptoucania ommata</i>	Pigmy Killifish
<i>Lucania parva</i> ^a	Rainwater Killifish
<i>Gambusia affinis</i>	Mosquito Fish
<i>Heterandria formosa</i>	Least Killifish
<i>Poecilia latipinna</i>	Salfin Molly
<i>Labidesthes sicculus</i>	Brook Silverside
<i>Morone saxatilis</i>	Striped Bass
<i>Acantharchus pomotis</i> ^a	Mud Sunfish
<i>Centrarchus macropterus</i>	Flier Sunfish
<i>Elassoma okefenokee</i>	Okefenokee Pymy Sunfish
<i>Elassoma zonatum</i>	Banded Pymy Sunfish
<i>Enneacanthus chaetodon</i> ^a	Blackbanded Sunfish
<i>Enneacanthus gloriosus</i>	Bluespotted Sunfish

Table A-1. Fishes of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 2 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Enneacanthus obesus</i>	Banded Sunfish
<i>Lepomis auritus</i>	Redbreast Sunfish
<i>Lepomis gulosus</i>	Warmouth
<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	Bluegill
<i>Lepomis marginatus</i>	Dollar Sunfish
<i>Lepomis microlupus</i>	Redear Sunfish
<i>Lepomis punctatus</i>	Spotted Sunfish
<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>	Largemouth Bass
<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>	Black Crappie
<i>Etheostoma fusiforme</i>	Swamp Darter
<i>Mugil cephalus</i>	Striped Mullet
<i>Trinectes maculatus</i>	Hogchoker
<i>Goblonellus shufeldti</i>	Freshwater Goby
<i>Lutjanus giseus</i>	Gray Snapper
<i>Euclnostomus argenteus</i>	Spotfin Mojarra
<i>Paralichthys lethostigma</i>	Southern Flounder

^a Listed species. See Table A-1.

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.

Table A-2. Amphibians and Reptiles of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 1 of 3)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<u>Salamanders</u>	
<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i> ^a	Flatwoods Salamander
<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	Marbled Salamander
<i>Ambystoma talpoideum</i>	Mole Salamander
<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i> ^a	Eastern Tiger Salamander
<i>Amphiuma means</i>	Two-Toed Amphiuma
<i>Desmognathus auriculatus</i>	Southern Salamander
<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>	Southern Two-Lined Salamander
<i>Eurycea quadridigitata</i>	Dwarf Salamander
<i>Notophthalmus perstriatus</i> ^a	Striped Newt
<i>Notophthalmus viridescens</i>	Central Newt
<i>Plethodon glutinosus</i>	Slimy Salamander
<i>Pseudobranchius branchus</i>	Narrow-Striped Dwarf Siren
<i>Pseudotriton montanus</i>	Rusty Mud Salamander
<i>Siren intermedia</i>	Eastern Lesser Siren
<i>Siren lacertina</i>	Greater Siren
<i>Stereochilus marginatus</i> ^a	Many-Lined Salamander
<u>Frogs</u>	
<i>Acris gryllus</i>	Southern Cricket Frog
<i>Bufo quercicus</i>	Oak Toad
<i>Bufo terrestris</i>	Southern Toad
<i>Gastrophryne carolinensis</i>	Eastern Narrow-Mouthed Toad
<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>	Gray Treefrog
<i>Hyla cinerea</i>	Green Treefrog
<i>Hyla crucifer</i>	Spring Peeper
<i>Hyla femoralis</i>	Pine Woods Treefrog
<i>Hyla gratiosa</i>	Barking Treefrog
<i>Hyla squirella</i>	Squirrel Treefrog
<i>Limnodynastes ornata</i>	Little Grass Frog
<i>Pseudacris nigrita</i>	Southern Chorus Frog
<i>Pseudacris ornata</i>	Ornate Chorus Frog
<i>Rana areolata</i> ^a	Florida Gopher Frog
<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>	Bullfrog
<i>Rana clamitans</i>	Bronze Frog
<i>Rana grylio</i>	Pig Frog
<i>Rana heckscheri</i>	River Frog
<i>Rana sphenoccephala</i>	Southern Leopard Frog
<i>Rana virgatipes</i>	Carpenter Frog
<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>	Eastern Spadefoot Toad
<u>Turtles</u>	
<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>	Common Snapping Turtle
<i>Deltochelys reticularia</i>	Florida Chicken Turtle
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> ^a	Gopher Tortoise
<i>Kinosternon baurii</i>	Striped Mud Turtle

Table A-2. Amphibians and Reptiles of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 2 of 3)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<u>Turtles (continued)</u>	
<i>Kinostern subrubrum</i>	Eastern Mud Turtle
<i>Pseudemys floridana</i>	Florida Cooter
<i>Pseudemys nelsoni</i> ^a	Florida Red-Bellied Turtle
<i>Sternotherus minor</i>	Loggerhead Musk Turtle
<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>	Stinkpot Turtle
<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	Florida Box Turtle
<i>Trachemys scripta</i>	Yellow-Bellied Turtle
<i>Trionyx ferox</i>	Florida Softshell Turtle
<u>Lizards</u>	
<i>Anolis carolinensis</i>	Green Anole Lizard
<i>Cnemidophorus sexlineatus</i>	Six-Lined Racerunner
<i>Eumeces egregius</i>	Northern Mole Skink
<i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>	Five-Lined Skink
<i>Eumeces inexpectatus</i>	Southeasteastern Five-Lined Skink
<i>Eumeces laticeps</i>	Broad-headed Skink
<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i>	Eastern Slender Grass Lizard
<i>Ophisaurus compressus</i>	Island Glass Lizard
<i>Ophisaurus ventralis</i>	Eastern Glass Lizard
<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>	Southern Fence Lizard
<i>Scincella laterale</i>	Ground Skink
<u>Snakes</u>	
<i>Agkistrodon piscivorus</i>	Florida Cottonmouth
<i>Cemophora coccinea</i>	Northern Scarlet Snake
<i>Coluber constrictor</i>	Southern Black Racer
<i>Crotalus adamanteus</i>	Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake
<i>Crotalus horridus</i> ^a	Canebrake Rattlesnake
<i>Diadophis punctatus</i>	Southern Ringneck Snake
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i> ^a	Eastern Indigo Snake
<i>Elaphe guttata</i>	Corn Snake, Red Rat Snake
<i>Elaphe obsoleta</i>	Yellow Rat Snake
<i>Farancia abacura</i>	Eastern Mud Snake
<i>Farancia erythrogramma</i>	Rainbow Snake
<i>Heterodon platyrhinos</i>	Eastern Hognose Snake
<i>Heterodon simus</i>	Southern Hognose Snake
<i>Lampropeltis calligaster</i> ^a	Mole Snake
<i>Lampropeltis getulus</i>	Florida Kingsnake
<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>	Scarlet Kingsnake
<i>Liodytes alleni</i>	Striped Swamp Snake
<i>Masticophis flagellum</i>	Eastern Coachwhip
<i>Micrurus fulvius</i>	Eastern Coral Snake
<i>Nerodia cyclopion</i>	Green Water Snake
<i>Nerodia erythrogaster</i>	Red-Bellied Water Snake

Table A-2. Amphibians and Reptiles of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 3 of 3)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<u>Snakes (continued)</u>	
<i>Nerodia fasciata</i>	Banded Water Snake
<i>Nerodia taxispilota</i>	Brown Water Snake
<i>Opheodrys aestivus</i>	Rough Green Snake
<i>Pituophis melanoleucus</i>	Florida Pine Snake
<i>Regina alleni</i>	Striped Crayfish Snake
<i>Regina rigida</i>	Eastern Glossy Crayfish Snake
<i>Rhadinaea flavilata</i>	Pine Woods Snake
<i>Seminatrix pygaea</i>	North Florida Black Swamp Snake
<i>Sistrurus muliarius</i>	Dusky Pigmy Rattlesnake
<i>Storeria dekayi</i>	Florida Brown Snake
<i>Storeria occipitomaculata</i>	Florida Red-Bellied Snake
<i>Tantilla relict</i>	Florida Crowned Snake
<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	Peninsula Ribbon Snake
<i>Thamophis sirtalis</i>	Eastern Garter Snake
<i>Virginia striatula</i>	Rough Earth Snake
<i>Virginia valeriae</i>	Eastern Smooth Earth Snake

^a Listed species. See Table A-1.

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.

Table A-3. Probable Breeding Birds of the St. Marys River Basin

Common Name	Common Name	Common Name
Pied-Billed Grebe	American Woodcock	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Brown Pelican ^a	Laughing Gull	Carolina Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	Gull-billed Tern ^a	Marsh Wren ^a
American Anhinga	Royal Tern ^a	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Least Bittern	Sandwich Tern	Eastern Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	Least Tern ^a	Wood Thrush
Great Egret	Black Skimmer ^a	American Robin
Snowy Egret	Rock Dove	Gray Catbird
Little Blue Heron	Mourning Dove	Northern Mockingbird
Tricolored Heron	Common Ground-Dove	Brown Trasher
Cattle Egret	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Loggerhead Shrike
Green-backed Heron	Eastern Screech-Owl	European Starling
Black-crowned Night-Heron ^a	Great Horned Owl	White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron ^a	Barred Owl	yellow-throated Vireo
White Ibis	Common Nighthawk	Red-eyed Vireo
Glossy Ibis ^a	Chuck-will's-widow	Northern Parula
Wood Stork ^a	Chimney Swift	Yellow-throated Warbler
Wood Duck	Ruby-throated	Pine Warbler
Black Vulture	Hummingbird	Prarie Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Belted Kingfisher	Prothonotary Warbler
Osprey ^a	Red-headed Woodpecker	Swainson's Warbler
Swallow-Tailed Kite ^a	Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Mississippi Kite	Hairy Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler
Bald Eagle ^a	Red-cockaded	Yellow-breasted Chat
Cooper's Hawk ^a	Woodpecker ^a	Summer Tanager
Red-shouldered Hawk	Northern Flicker	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Blue Grosbeak
Wild Turkey	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Indigo Bunting
Northern Bobwhite	Acadian Flycatcher	Painted Bunting
Black Rail ^a	Great Crested Flycatcher	Rufous-sided Towhee
Clapper Rail	Eastern Kingbird ^a	Bachman's Sparrow ^a
King Rail	Gray Kingbird	Field Sparrow
Common Moorhen	Purple Martin	Seaside Sparrow ^a
Purple Gallinule	Northern Rough-winged	Red-winged Blackbird
Limpkin ^a	Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Sandhill Crane ^a	Barn Swallow	Boat-tailed Grackle
Wilson's Plover	Blue Jay	Common Grackle
Killdeer	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Oystercatcher ^a	Fish Crow	Orchard Oriole
Willet	Carolina Chickadee	House Sparrow
	Tufted Titmouse	
	White-breasted Nuthatch	

^a Listed species. See Table A-1.

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.

Table A-4. Mammals of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 1 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	Virginia Opossum
<i>Sorex longirostris</i>	Souther Shrew
<i>Blarina carolinensis</i>	Southern Short-tailed Shrew
<i>Cryptotis parva</i>	Least Shrew
<i>Scalopus aquaticus</i>	Eastern Mole
<i>Condylura cristata</i> ^a	Star-nosed Mole
<i>Myotis grisescens</i> ^a	Gray Bat
<i>Myotis austroriparius</i>	Southeastern Bat
<i>Pipistrellus subflavus</i>	Eastern Pipistrelle
<i>Plecotus rafinesquii</i> ^a	Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Big Brown Bat
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	Hoary Bat
<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	Red Bat
<i>Lasiurus seminolus</i>	Seminole Bat
<i>Lasiurus Intermedius</i> ^a	Yellow Bat
<i>Nycticeius humeralis</i>	Evening Bat
<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>	Brazilian Free-tailed Bat
<i>Dasyus novemcinctus</i>	Nine-banded Armadillo
<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>	Eastern Cottontail
<i>Sylvilagus palustris</i>	Marsh Rabbit
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Gray Squirrel
<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i> ^a	Sherman's Fox Squirrel
<i>Glaucomys volans</i>	Southern Flying Squirrel
<i>Geomys pinetis</i>	Southeastern Pocket Gopher
<i>Castor canadensis</i>	Beaver
<i>Neotoma floridana</i>	Eastern Woodrat
<i>Sigmodon hispidus</i>	Hispid Cotton Rat
<i>Reithrodontomys humulis</i>	Eastern Harvest Mouse
<i>Oryzomys palustris</i>	Marsh Rice Rat
<i>Peromyscus polionotus</i>	Oldfield or Beach Mouse
<i>Peromyscus gossypinus</i>	Cotton Mouse
<i>Ochrotomys nutallii</i>	Golden Mouse
<i>Microtus pinetorum</i>	Pine Vole
<i>Neofiber alleni</i> ^a	Round-tailed Muskrat
<i>Mus musculus</i>	House Mouse
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	Black or Roof Rat
<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Norway Rat
<i>Myocastor coypus</i>	Nutria
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i> ^a	Florida Black Bear
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	Raccoon
<i>Mustela vison</i>	Mink
<i>Mustela frenata</i>	Long-tailed Weasel
<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Striped Skunk
<i>Lutra canadensis</i>	River Otter
<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	Gray Fox

Table A-4. Mammals of the St. Marys River Basin (Page 2 of 2)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red Fox
<i>Canis latrans</i>	Coyote
<i>Felis rufus</i>	Bobcat
<i>Trichechus manatus</i> ^a	Florida Manatee
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Feral Hog
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	White-tailed Deer

Source: Lynch and Baker, 1988.



APPENDIX B

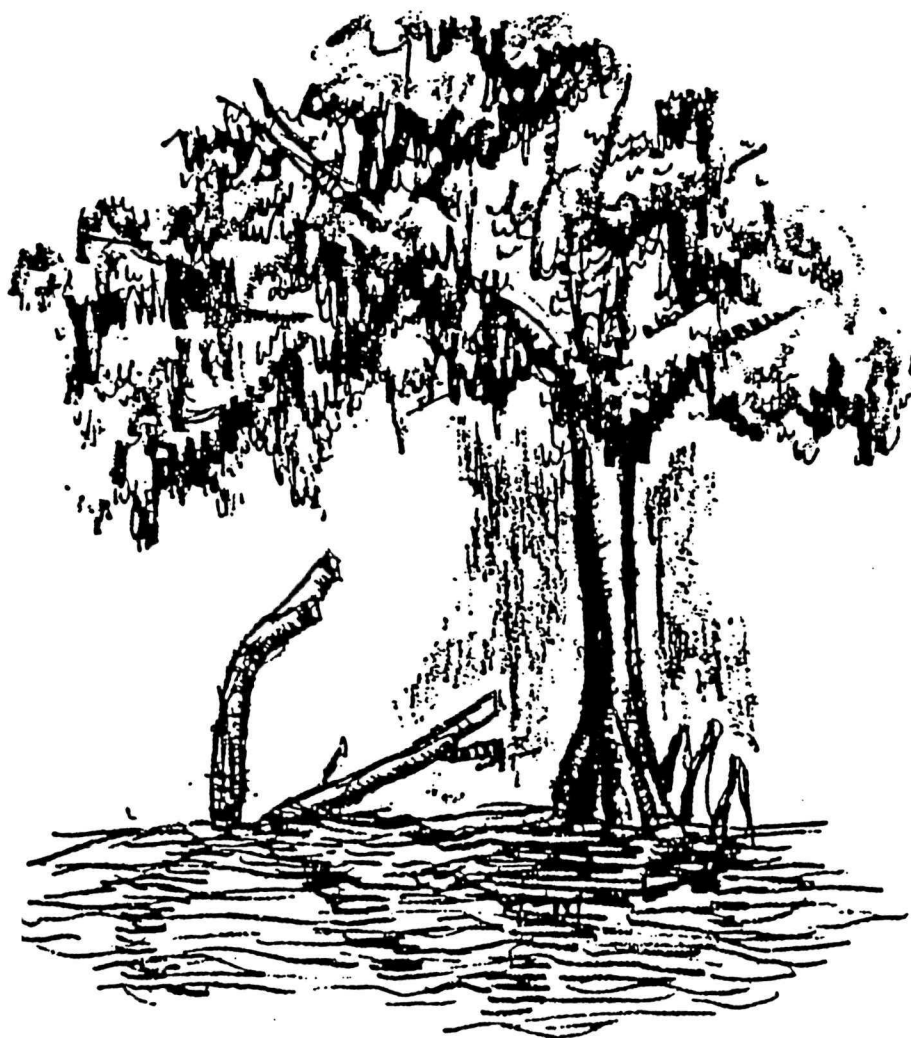


ST. MARYS RIVER

Georgia and Florida



"What Would a Wild & Scenic River Study Mean?"



PROPOSED STUDY OF THE ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA

Background:

Americans have viewed our nation's abundance of rivers as a vast resource since early settlement began. After decades of harnessing our rivers for growth and development, our environmental conscience was awakened in the 1960's to the fact that clean, natural waterways are not in endless supply. Congress, acting upon this growing public concern, passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542) in 1968. This Act recognizes the value of rivers and their environs as outstanding natural treasures which must be protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

Study Authorization:

The Act designated several rivers for immediate protection and authorized study of additional rivers as potential components of the Federally-protected system. Through the years Congress has responded to the desires of the citizenry by amending the Act to either designate or authorize study of additional rivers.

Legislation is currently pending in the Congress which would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to study the St. Marys River (Georgia and Florida) to determine if it qualifies and is suitable for National Wild and Scenic River status.

Study Process:

If the St. Marys study bill is enacted and study funds are made available, the NPS would spend approximately three years evaluating the river's natural resources and considering a number of protection alternatives in order to make recommendations to the Congress concerning the river's future protection. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the NPS planning guidelines, and common sense all dictate that local residents, adjoining landowners, and the general public be substantially involved throughout the study in shaping the final study report and recommendations. The NPS role in this process is to act as an extended professional staff to the Congress for the purpose of preparing a report on the natural resource values of the St. Marys River and determining the public's desire for the river's future.

Eligibility:

The Act states that in order for a river to be eligible for designation, it must be free flowing and must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.

Classification:

The Act further requires that the study indicate the appropriate classification should the river be designated. Rivers are

classified as either wild, scenic, or recreational depending on the river's degree of naturalness.

The classification categories are defined as follows:

Wild river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Suitability:

As the study progresses, an array of alternatives are developed for public discussion and consideration in order to determine if the river is "suitable" for designation. Typical alternatives

include a "no action" alternative, Federal management alternative, State management alternative, and protection at the local level without designation alternative.

Public Involvement:

The support of local concerned citizens is the single most important factor in determining that a river is suitable for designation. Accordingly, involving the public and local landowners throughout the entire study is vital if they are to feel that Wild and Scenic River designation is the best alternative for "their" river both as individuals and as a community. If a study of the St. Marys River is authorized, the NPS would sponsor a public forum within the study area prior to initiation of the study. These forums would be for the purpose of announcing the study, explaining the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, and gaining a feel for the public concerns and interests in the river's future. Once the study begins, an effort would be made to identify all riverfront landowners from county tax records in order that they might be notified of the study and their opinions freely given to the study team. Further, the NPS would like to organize a citizens advisory committee within the study area for the purpose of assisting with the public involvement process. The advisory committee would serve as a local point of contact through which the study team

could be more responsive to citizen concerns, and through which all draft plans or alternatives could be reviewed, commented upon, and returned to the NPS for appropriate revision. An advisory committee should include representation from all segments of the study area population--businesses, landowners, local governments, civic organizations, conservation organizations, etc.

Another method of public involvement used by an NPS study team is periodical mailing of a newsletter or public information brochure at key points during the course of the study. Newsletters are normally appropriate early in the planning process to explain what the public might expect and to answer frequently asked questions. Other key points occur when preliminary study findings and alternatives have been developed and, of course, when the preliminary study recommendations are available.

A Congressional study report is prepared by the NPS and circulated in draft for public review and comment. Based on public comment, the report is finalized for submission to the Congress.

Designation:

National Wild and Scenic River designation would immediately and permanently preclude Federal water resource development projects

within the river which would result in "direct and adverse impacts" to those natural attributes which qualify it as a component of the system. Direct shoreline restrictions would extend only to Federal or Federally-assisted areas. The NPS would be required to develop a comprehensive river management plan and a land protection plan for the river which would determine the priorities and methods for protection of adjoining lands considered critical to maintain the river's natural character. Both the comprehensive management plan and the land protection plan are done with the same degree of public involvement as the original feasibility study.

The overall objective of wild and scenic designation and long-term management is to protect the river's outstanding natural character. This does not mean that growth and development are no longer allowed; however, future development would have to occur in an environmentally sensitive manner to assure that the river is not degraded.

In summary, National Wild and Scenic River designation of the St. Marys River would assure that the river and a narrow visual corridor along both banks would remain substantially unchanged.

The river would remain clean, structurally unmodified, and with the shoreline natural to the extent practical. Public use of the riverine environment would be managed to provide enjoyable recreational use in a manner which would not degrade the river's considerable natural and cultural values. Local citizens would have a major role in shaping the river's protection and future use.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What restrictions are placed upon the river when the Congress authorizes a National Wild and Scenic River study?

A. As stated in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, a river authorized for study as a potential component of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System is protected from Federally-funded or assisted water resource development projects during the study and for a period not to exceed three years following completion of the study. This protection generally means that Federally-funded or licensed dams, channel modification, or dredging activities which would result in a direct and adverse effect on the river's potential for designation as a Wild and Scenic River would not be permitted. Federal agencies call a "time-out" in plans that could alter the river's natural character, until the NPS can evaluate the river's eligibility and suitability for

designation and the Congress can consider and take appropriate actions on the NPS findings.

Q. How are private lands adjoining the river affected during the study period?

A. A private landowner's rights to personal use of his lands is in no way affected during the study.

Q. I have plans to construct a boat dock on my river front property. Will the study or possible future designation prevent me from having a dock?

A. If your dock is in an area where docks are common and your plans call for a structure which is consistent with other docks in the area, the NPS would not voice objections to your permit application either during the study or following designation. If the river were designated, we would oppose new docks on stretches of the river classified as "wild" or where we consider a dock to be out-of-character with the nature of the river at that particular location.

Q. What are the restrictions on shoreline development during the study and after designation?

A. During the study, the NPS has no authority over shoreline development; however, in the event that Federal assistance (grants, loans, or permits) is needed for the development, we would encourage the appropriate Federal agency to require that the applicant protect the river from "direct and adverse" impacts. The study would identify a linear corridor on both banks of the river which should be protected if the river is designated. The degree of protection would be determined by the river classification (wild, scenic, or recreational) and by the outstanding natural, cultural or geologic characteristics. Following preparation of a comprehensive management plan and a land protection plan (plans prepared after designation) the NPS would, preferably, by conservation easements or volunteer landowner protection, or in some cases by fee acquisition, acquire those lands most critical to the protection of the river's character. The Act sets limits on acquisition which includes a maximum average acquisition of 100 acres per river mile. In addition, the Act provides for owners of improved properties constructed before January 1, 1967, to retain a right of use and occupancy, if it is determined their property has to be acquired.

All land acquisition is also dependent upon approved management and land protection plans and Congressional appropriation of acquisition funds.

Q. Will I have an opportunity to voice my opinions to the NPS about this study and the effects it may have on me or my land?

A. The NPS encourages public involvement throughout the study and will make every effort to discuss your concerns or interest by correspondence, telephone, or personal contact at meetings near your home. We would strive during the course of the study to answer your questions and address your concerns in a manner which would relieve all objections or apprehensions to designation.

Q. Can I continue to farm my land, as I always have before, if the St. Marys River is designated a National Wild and Scenic River?

A. While designation does affect activities on Federal land, there is no Federal authority to control legitimate use of private land, nor would there be any Federal authority to force State and local governments to control or modify land uses.

Put simply, designation does not adversely affect existing land uses along a river--timber management, farming, mineral extraction, commercial activities, residences, and communities. These uses are an integral part of the river corridor and its history and are often part of the reason the river was found eligible for the system. The term "living landscape" has been frequently applied to Wild and Scenic River areas because they are so often inextricably tied to local people and their customs. Designation could lead to some restrictions (if local governments adopt them) on major new building development on privately owned land, and to land use activities on Federal land if they would be destructive to major aspects of the river environment.

For Additional Information Contact:

National Park Service
Planning and Federal Programs Division
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
404-331-5838



APPENDIX C

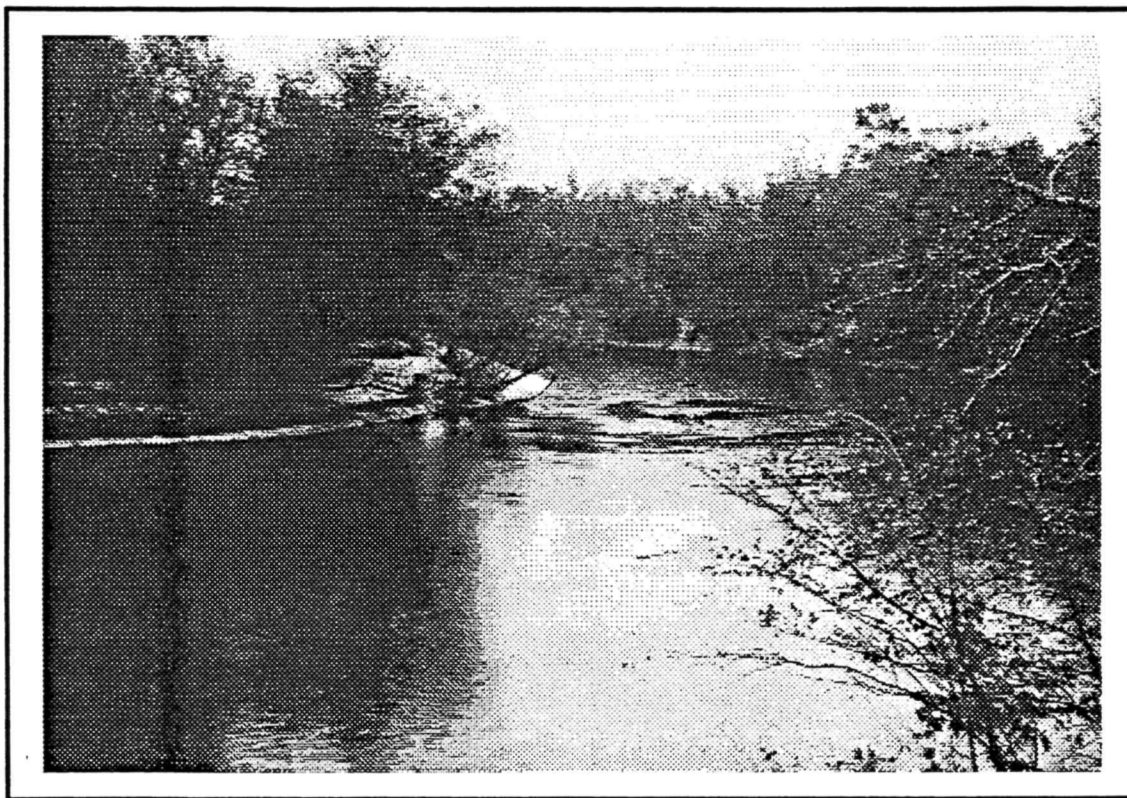


ST. MARYS RIVER STUDY

GEORGIA AND FLORIDA



PRELIMINARY ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION



SEPTEMBER 1991

Background:

Beginning with our first early days of settlement, Americans have viewed our nation's abundance of rivers as a vast resource. After decades of harnessing our rivers for growth and development, our environmental conscience was awakened in the 1960s to the fact that clean, natural waterways are not in endless supply. Congress, acting upon this growing public concern, passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542) in 1968. This Act recognizes the value of rivers and their environs as outstanding natural treasures that must be protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

Study Authorization:

The Act designated several rivers for immediate protection and authorized the study of additional rivers as potential components of the Federally-protected system. Through the years Congress has responded to the desires of the citizenry by amending the Act to either designate or authorize study of additional rivers. In 1990 Congress passed Public Law 101-364, which authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to study the St. Marys River (Georgia and Florida) to determine if it qualifies and is suitable for National Wild and Scenic River status.

Study Process:

In January, 1991, the NPS began the St. Marys River Study and will spend approximately three years evaluating the river's natural resources. To date, the study team has gathered information about the river's natural resources, held four public meetings, and studied the river by boat and airplane in order to make a **preliminary** determination of the river's eligibility for National Wild and Scenic River designation. A number of protection alternatives are being considered for making recommendations to Congress concerning the river's future protection.

The County Commission Chairman in each of the four study area counties was asked in August, 1991, to suggest representatives to serve on a study advisory group to assist the study team. These local representatives will be asked to review and comment on draft plans prepared by the study team, and will assure that the plans and alternatives developed by the study reflect local ideas and interests.

Eligibility:

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that in order for a river to be eligible for designation, it must be free-flowing and must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values. The St. Marys River possess three distinct natural zones along its course.

In order to treat each zone equally, the river was divided into three segments and each segment was evaluated separately. The map on page 6 shows the approximate location of the "lower," "middle" and "upper" segments of the river. The lower segment includes approximately 18 river miles (RMs), from the Bells River confluence (RM 12) to approximately 3 RM above the U.S. Highway 17 bridge crossing (RM 27). This lower segment is tidal and represents a coastal estuary environment. The middle segment includes approximately 29 RMs, from the upper limit of the middle segment (RM 30 in the vicinity of White Oak Plantation) to approximately RM 59 in the vicinity of Trader's Hill. This segment has tidal influence, with the river channel becoming more defined and the shoreline vegetation changing character from marsh land to typical wetland vegetation and extensive baldcypress and blackgum swamp forest. The upper segment includes approximately 66 RMs, from the upper limit of the middle segment to approximately RM 125 at the headwaters of the North Prong in the Okefenokee Swamp. The upper segment contains a mixture of slash and loblolly pines and various oaks. Narrow sloughs and depressions contain typical baldcypress and ogeeche tupelo floodplain swamp vegetation.

Each segment of the river was evaluated against criteria listed on the matrices on pages 7,8,and 9 and by using the river corridor development criteria developed by the Department of the Interior during the "Nationwide Rivers Inventory," (NRI) published in 1982. Table 1, page 10, lists the various development criteria

point values used for evaluating development in the NRI.

The **preliminary** results of these eligibility evaluations indicate that all three segments have "outstandingly remarkable" characteristics that qualify each segment for national designation; however, applying the corridor development criteria point system employed by the NRI, approximately 42 RMs of the 113 RMs evaluated were found to exceed the acceptable shoreline development criteria and, therefore, were ineligible. Using the shoreline development criteria, 100 shoreline development points accumulated in any given RM eliminates that RM from eligibility. A total of 71 RMs, from approximately 1 RM above Flea Hill/Kings Ferry to the confluence of the Middle Prong and North Prong (upstream from the Macclenny bridge), were found eligible for National Wild and Scenic River designation. These findings, shown on the map on page 11, are **preliminary** and are still being evaluated based on aerial photography and additional field investigation. Of special concern for further field investigation is the North Prong above its confluence with the Middle Prong.

Classification:

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act further requires the St. Marys River Study to indicate the appropriate classification should the river be designated. Rivers are classified as either wild, scenic, or recreational, depending on the river's degree of natural character.

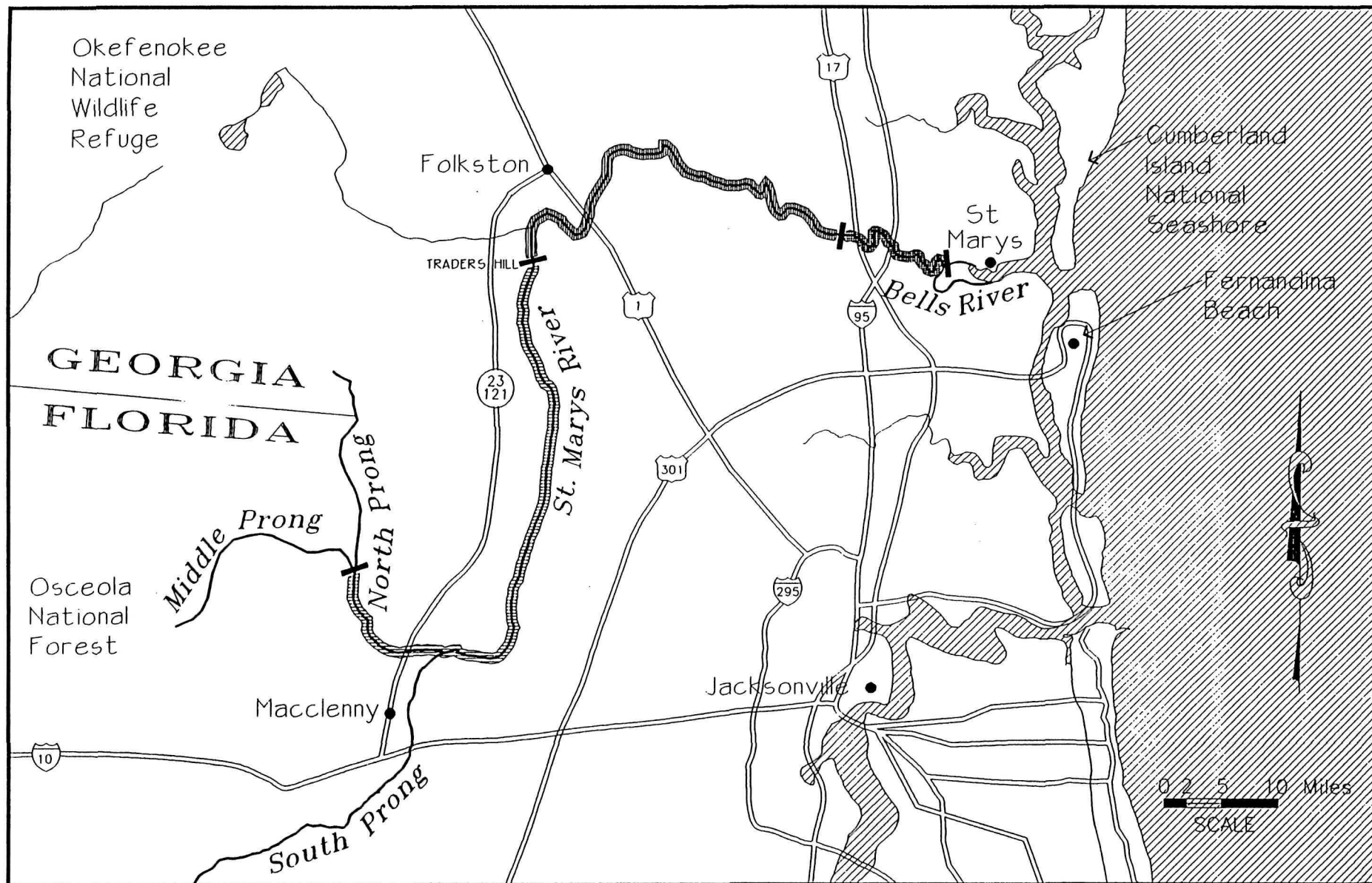
The classification categories are defined as follows:

Wild river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational river areas--Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

A preliminary recommendation of possible river classifications for the St. Marys River are indicated on the map on page 14.



UPPER SEGMENT



MIDDLE SEGMENT



LOWER SEGMENT

ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION SEGMENTS

St. Marys River Study

NPS - SERO - 8/91

**EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE LOWER SEGMENT
ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA**

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>MINIMAL</u>	<u>COMMON</u>	<u>DISTINCTIVE</u>
SCENIC			
Landform	- Little variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not unusual	- Complex, unusual
Rock Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Not unusual	- Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	- Homogeneous	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some diversity	- Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	- Flow distracts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flow sustains	- Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distractive	- Noticeable	- Unimposing
Degree of Relief	- Minimum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	- Large
Clarity of Water	- Unclear, constant	- Seasonally turbid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly clear
Water Falls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Small, unimpressive	- Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Florickling	- Undesirable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	- Lacking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	- Sporadic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-2 seasons	- 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	- Few opportunities	- Expected species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unusual species, high variety
Class/Difficulty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginner (I-III)	- Intermediate (I-IV)	- Difficult (I-VI)
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	- Unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for study	- Encourages study
Caves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None identified	- Present, typical	- Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	- Small variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mod. variety, typical, expected	- Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Typical, representative	- Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	- Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	- Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality

EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE MIDDLE SEGMENT ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>MINIMAL</u>	<u>COMMON</u>	<u>DISTINCTIVE</u>
SCENIC			
Landform	- Little variety	<u>X</u> Not unusual	- Complex, unusual
Rock Features	<u>X</u> Lacking	- Not unusual	- Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	- Homogeneous	- Some diversity	<u>X</u> Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	- Flow distracts	<u>X</u> Flow sustains	- Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	<u>X</u> Distractive	- Noticeable	- Unimposing
Degree of Relief	- Minimum	<u>X</u> Moderate	- Large
Clarity of Water	- Unclear, constant	- Seasonally turbid	<u>X</u> Mostly clear
Water Falls	<u>X</u> Lacking	- Small, unimpressive	- Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Flicking	- Undesirable	<u>X</u> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	- Lacking	<u>X</u> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	- Sporadic	<u>X</u> 1-2 seasons	- 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	- Few opportunities	- Expected species	<u>X</u> Unusual species, high variety
Class/Difficulty	<u>X</u> Beginner (I-III)	- Intermediate (I-IV)	- Difficult (I-VI)
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	- Unexposed	<u>X</u> Opportunity for study	- Encourages study
Caves	<u>X</u> None identified	- Present, typical	- Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	- Small variety	<u>X</u> Mod. variety, typical, expected	- Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<u>X</u> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	<u>X</u> Typical, representative	- Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	- Unlikely	<u>X</u> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	- Unlikely	<u>X</u> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	<u>X</u> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<u>X</u> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	<u>X</u> Unique in occurrence/quality

**EVALUATION MATRIX OF THE UPPER SEGMENT
ST. MARYS RIVER, GEORGIA/FLORIDA**

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>MINIMAL</u>	<u>COMMON</u>	<u>DISTINCTIVE</u>
SCENIC			
Landform	- Little variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not unusual	- Complex, unusual
Rock Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Not unusual	- Unusual color, size, etc.
Vegetative Cover	- Homogeneous	- Some diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Many natural patterns
Stream Aesthetics	- Flow distracts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flow sustains	- Flow greatly enhances
Manmade Structures	- Distractive	- Noticeable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unimposing
Degree of Relief	- Minimum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	- Large
Clarity of Water	- Unclear, constant	- Seasonally turbid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly clear
Water Falls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacking	- Small, unimpressive	- Frequent, imposing
RECREATIONAL			
Swimming/Picnicking	- Undesirable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Fishery Use	- Lacking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispersed, low use	- Concentrated, high use
Length of Season	- Sporadic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-2 seasons	- 3-4 seasons
Wildlife Viewing	- Few opportunities	- Expected species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unusual species, high variety
Class/Difficulty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginner (I-III)	- Intermediate (II-IV)	- Difficult (I-VI)
GEOLOGIC			
Geologic Formation	- Unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for study	- Encourages study
Caves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None identified	- Present, typical	- Present, unique
FISH & WILDLIFE			
Species diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL			
Nat'l Register Sites	- Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present/nominated
Preserved Sites	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unlikely	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsurveyed/potential	- Present
FLORA/BOTANIC FEATURES			
Species Diversity	- Small variety	- Mod. variety, typical, expected	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional variety
Species Uniqueness/Importance	- Ubiquitous species	- Typical native species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique (T & E & P)
Habitat Uniqueness/Quality	- Ecosystem degraded, mundane	- Typical, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unique in occurrence/quality

TABLE 1

Partial Listing-National River Inventory (NRI) Development Values

Disqualifiers

Airport, large
Canal, parallel active
City, over 10,000 pop.
Dump, large
Factory, active
Gas/oil field
Mine, strip active
Power plant
Industrial area

Bridges

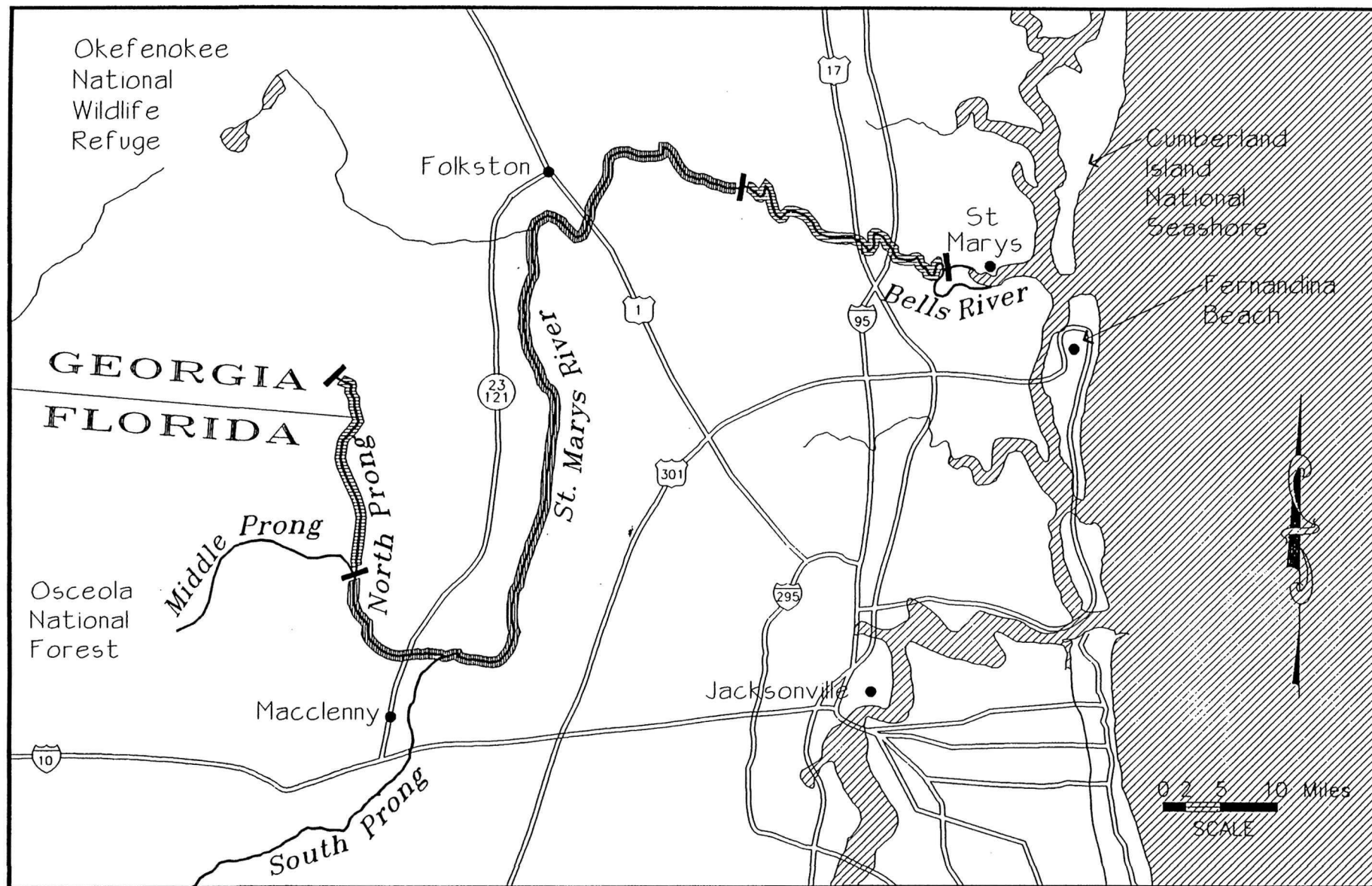
6 Graded dirt road
20 Paved road
40 Paved 4-lane road
15 Railroad
10 Unpaved all-weather road

Roads

9 Graded dirt parallel
10 Paved ending/encroachment
30 Paved parallel
75 Paved 4-lane parallel
3 Primitive parallel
5 Unpaved ending/encroachment

Structures

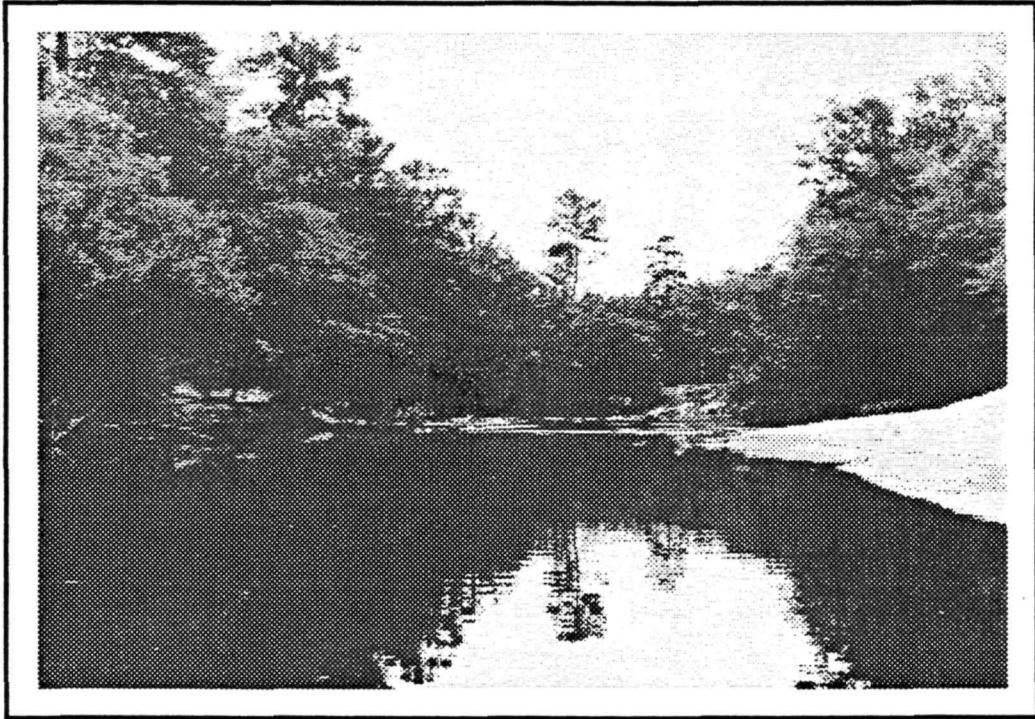
40 Business
10 Barn
7 Cabin
15 Cemetary
25 Church
30 Country Club
30 Dairy
8 Dwelling
20 Garbage dump
50 Junkyard
30 Marina
40 Motel
40 Trailer park
7 Park, wayside
10 Picnic area
75 Sand and gravel pit
40 Saw mill, small
40 Sewage plant
25 Storage tank, water
30 Store, country
30 Swimming pool
75 Town, 500-9,999 pop.
10 Ramp, paved boat



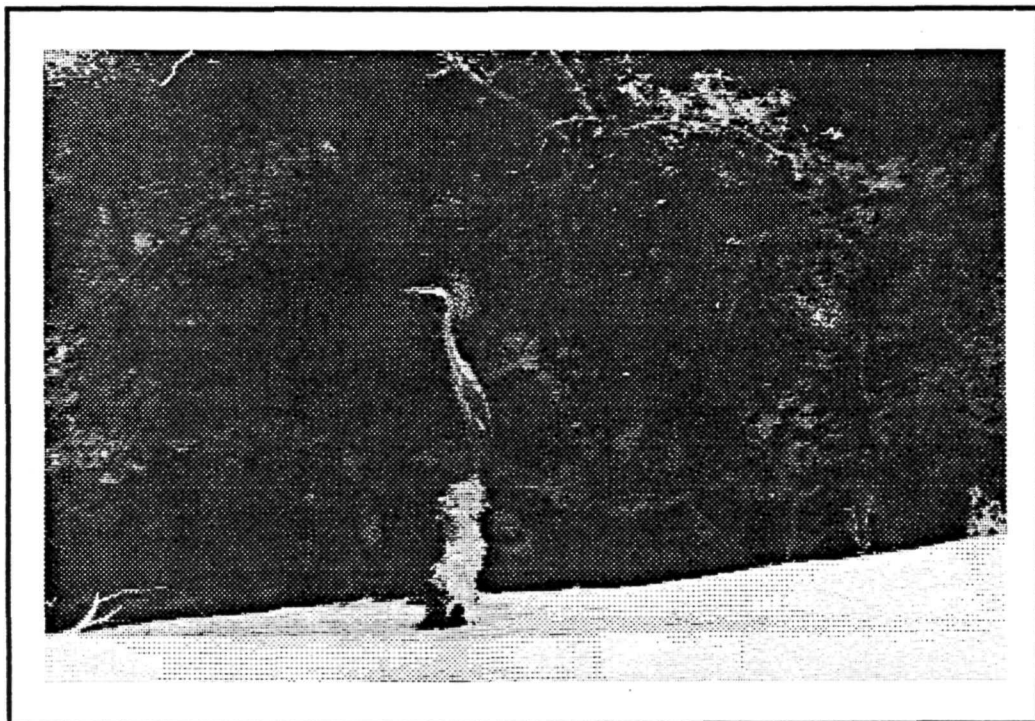
PRELIMINARY ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS **St. Marys River Study**

NPS - SERO - 8/91

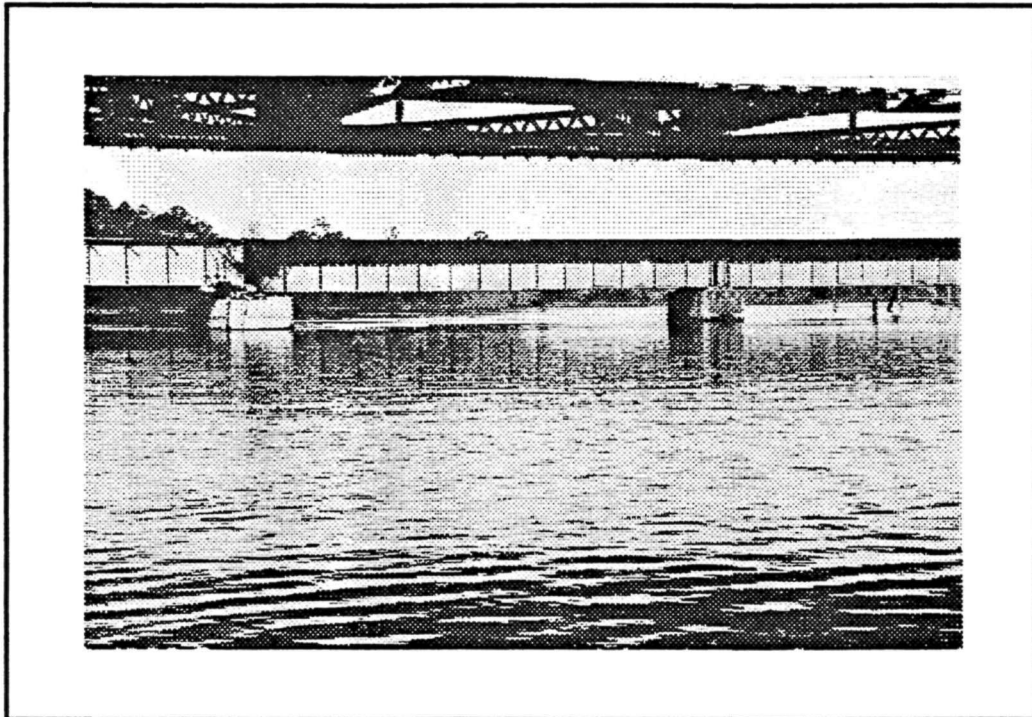
NATURAL AREAS



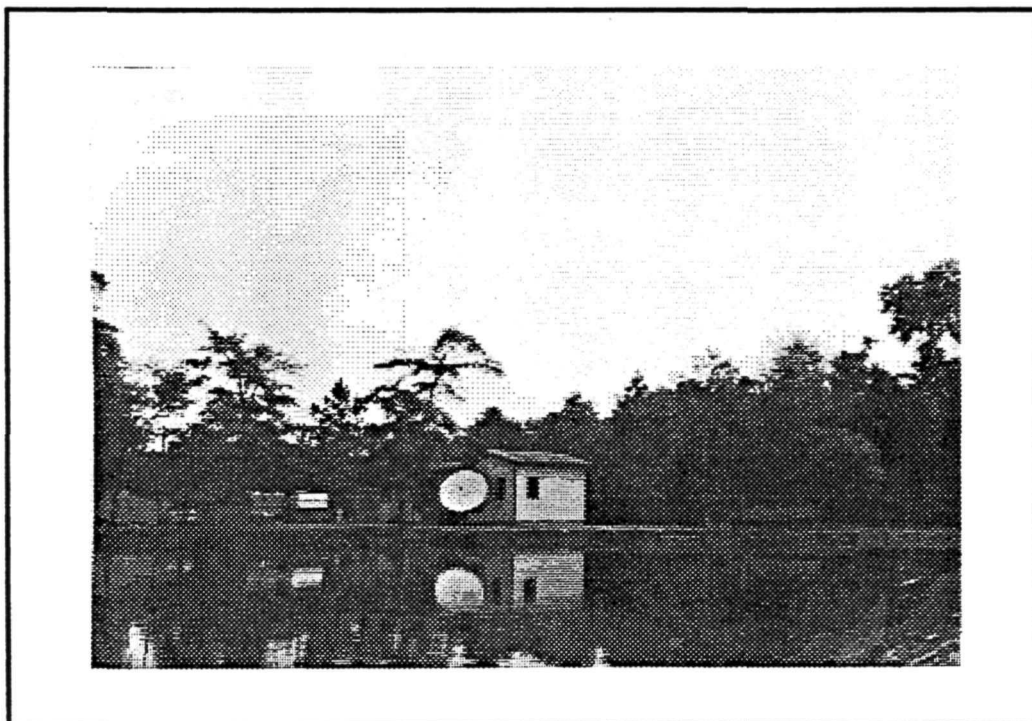
WILDLIFE ABOUNDS ON THE RIVER'S NATURAL SETTING



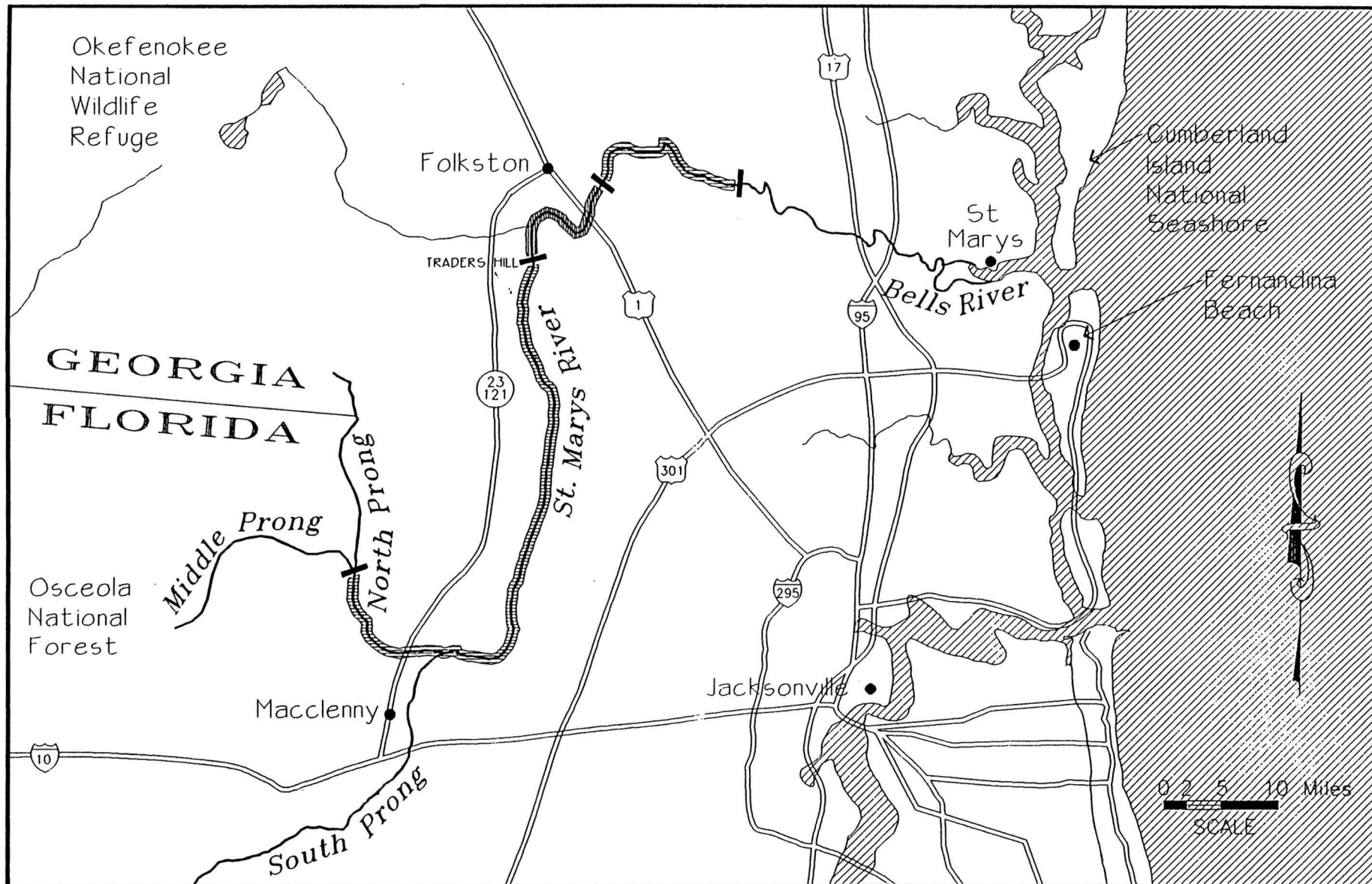
DEVELOPED AREAS



**SEABOARD COASTLINE RAILROAD BRIDGE VIEWED
FROM UNDER US HIGHWAY 17 BRIDGE**



SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT – VICINITY OF FLEA HILL, GEORGIA



SCENIC



RECREATIONAL

PRELIMINARY RIVER CLASSIFICATION

St. Marys River Study

NPS - SERO - 8/91

Suitability:

In order for a river to be recommended for National Wild and Scenic River designation, it must be both eligible and suitable. As the study progresses, an array of alternatives will be developed for public discussion and consideration in order to determine if the river is "suitable" for designation. Typical alternatives include a "no action" alternative, a Federal management alternative, a State management alternative, and an alternative for protection at the local level without designation. If no feasible alternative for managing the river as a component of the national system is found, designation will not be recommended. A preliminary suitability determination will not be made until the public has been given an opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary eligibility determination presented in this document.

Public Involvement:

The support of local concerned citizens is the most important factor in determining that a river is suitable for designation. Accordingly, involving the public and local landowners throughout the entire study is vital. The local citizens must feel that Wild and Scenic River designation is the best alternative for "their" river, both as individuals and as a community. The study team will continue to sponsor public forums within the study area to explain study findings and to seek comments and suggestions from the public.

Designation:

In addition to the preliminary finding of eligibility discussed in this document, if a suitable river management alternative is found, Congress would have the opportunity to include portions of the St. Marys River in the National Wild and Scenic River System. What effect would Congressional designation have on the river? Designation would immediately and permanently preclude any Federal water resource development projects within the river that would result in "direct and adverse impacts" to those natural attributes which qualify it as a component of the system. Direct shoreline restrictions would extend only to Federal or Federally-assisted areas. The NPS would be required to develop a comprehensive river management plan and a land protection plan for the river which would determine the priorities and methods for protection of adjoining lands considered critical to maintaining the river's natural character. Both the comprehensive management plan and the land protection plan are done with the same degree of public involvement as the original feasibility study.

The study team is currently investigating the feasibility of national designation of the river with very little shoreline acquisition. Existing Federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to wetland, floodplains, erosion, sedimentation, and water quality appear to provide sufficient shoreline protection without Federal purchase of lands or interest in lands (easements).

If such an alternative is feasible, only dispersed sites for access and visitor support facilities would involve possible acquisition. Where existing publicly-owned access sites are available, the need for Federal acquisition would be further reduced.

The overall objective of wild and scenic designation and long-term management is to protect the river's outstanding natural character. This does not mean that growth and development are no longer allowed; however, future development should occur in an environmentally sensitive manner to assure that the river is not degraded.

In summary, National Wild and Scenic River designation of the St. Marys River would assure that the river and a narrow visual corridor along both banks would remain substantially unchanged. The river's waters would remain clean, the river channel unmodified, and the shoreline natural to the extent practical. Public use of the riverine environment would be managed to provide recreational use in a manner which would not degrade the river's considerable natural and cultural values. Local citizens would have a major role in shaping the river's protection and future use.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What restrictions are placed upon the river when Congress authorizes a National Wild and Scenic River study?

A. As stated in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, a river authorized for study as a potential component of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System is protected from Federally funded or assisted water resource development projects during the study and for a period not to exceed three years following completion of the study. This protection generally means that Federally funded or licensed dams, channel modification, or dredging activities which would result in a direct and adverse effect on the river's potential for designation as a Wild and Scenic River would not be permitted. Federal agencies call a "time-out" in plans that could alter the river's natural character, until the NPS can evaluate the river's eligibility and suitability for designation and Congress can consider and take appropriate actions on the NPS findings.

Q. How are private lands adjoining the river affected during the study period?

A. A private landowner's rights to personal use of his lands is in no way affected during the study.

Q. I have plans to construct a boat dock on my riverfront property. Will the study or possible future designation prevent me from having a dock?

A. If your dock is in an area where docks are common and your plans call for a structure which is consistent with other docks in the area, the NPS would not voice objections to your permit application either during the study or following designation. If the river were designated, we would oppose new docks on stretches of the river classified as "wild" or where we consider a dock to be out-of-character with the nature of the river at that particular location.

Q. What are the restrictions on shoreline development during the study and after designation?

A. During the study, the NPS has no authority over shoreline development; however, in the event that Federal assistance (grants, loans, or permits) is needed for the development, we would encourage the appropriate Federal agency to require that the applicant protect the river from "direct and adverse" impacts. The study would identify a linear corridor on both banks of the river which should be protected if the river is designated. The degree of protection would be determined by the river classification (wild, scenic, or recreational) and by the outstanding natural,

cultural or geologic characteristics. Following preparation of a comprehensive management plan and a land protection plan (plans prepared after designation), the NPS may acquire those lands **most critical** to the protection of the river's character. Acquisition could be either in fee or as conservation easements. It should be emphasized that acquisition will affect lands at a limited number of access points and possibly at critical natural, cultural or geologically significant areas within the corridor.

On less critical lands within the corridor, protection will be sought in the form of volunteer landowner agreements to refrain from building permanent structures or cutting timber within approximately 50-200 feet of the river bank. In some cases state laws or local zoning ordinances require a similar "set-back" from rivers. (As stated on page 7, alternatives are being considered which would recommend national designation without acquisition of a continuous shoreline corridor due to the protection currently afforded the river through existing Federal, state, and local requirements.)

If acquisition of private property is necessary, the Act sets limits which include a maximum average acquisition of 100 acres per river mile. In addition, the Act provides for owners of improved properties constructed before January 1, 1967, to retain a right of use and occupancy, if it is determined their property is to be acquired. All land acquisition is also dependent upon approved

management and land protection plans and Congressional appropriation of acquisition funds.

Q. Will I have an opportunity to voice my opinions to the NPS about this study and the effects it may have on me or my land?

A. The NPS encourages public involvement throughout the study and will make every effort to discuss individual or group concerns or interests by correspondence, telephone, or personal contact at meetings in the study area. We will strive during the course of the study to answer questions and address concerns in a manner which will relieve objections and apprehensions about designation.

Q. Can I continue to farm my land, as I always have before, if the St. Marys River is designated as a National Wild and Scenic River?

A. While designation does affect activities on Federal land, there is no Federal authority to control land use on private property, nor would there be any Federal authority to force State and local governments to control or modify land uses. Put simply, designation does not adversely affect existing land uses along a river--timber management, farming, mineral extraction, commercial activities, residences, and communities. These uses are an integral part of the river corridor and its history and are often part of the reason the river was found eligible for the system.

The term "living landscape" has been frequently applied to Wild and Scenic River areas because they are so often inextricably tied to local people and their customs. Designation could lead to some restrictions (if local governments adopt them) on major new building development on privately owned land, and to land use activities on Federal land if they would be destructive to major aspects of the river environment.

Q. If the St. Marys River is recommended for national designation, can the NPS's right of condemnation be removed?

A. Legislation to designate the St. Marys River could specify many procedures to be followed. Removal of condemnation authority and a ceiling on acquisition funds have both been used in legislation on other river designations.

Q. What is meant by suitability?

A. Suitability is determined by such factors as extent of public lands in the river area; costs required for acquisition, development, management and operation; public, local, or state interest in acting to protect and manage the river; and the feasibility and timeliness of designation. The final suitability determination is made by the Secretary of the Interior.

Q. What lands would the NPS consider for acquisition if the river is designated?

A. Management as a National Wild and Scenic River requires protection of the riverine resources whose exceptional values qualified the river for national designation. In addition to the river itself, normally these values would be limited to a narrow corridor along each river bank where historic, cultural or scenic values occur. This narrow corridor can be protected by local zoning, volunteer landowner agreements, conservation easements, or fee simple acquisition. Fee simple acquisition is the most expensive method and generally not the preferred NPS method of shoreline protection. Some small acreage sites would be purchased for public access and to provide for public health and safety.

Q. Can the NPS provide assistance to the local governments to develop a river protection plan and local zoning without national designation?

A. The NPS Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program provides planning and other technical assistance to local governments and conservation organizations for the development of river corridor protection plans.

REVISED KEY STUDY DATES

November 1991	Public review of preliminary suitability determination and draft alternatives
December 1991	Begin preparation of study report
March 1992	Preliminary draft study report and environmental document completed
August 1992	Public review of draft study report
September 1992	Public forums to discuss draft study report
November 1992	Revise draft study report based on public comments
August 1993	Final study report to Congress
September 1993	Public distribution of final study report

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