



MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council

FROM: Stan Rogers, Chair, May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC)

RE: WAPAC Recommendation to Establish an Agreement with Beaufort County to Implement the May River Watershed Action Plan

DATE: MARCH 28, 2024

CC: Stephen Steese, Town Manager
Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager
Kim Washok-Jones, Director of Projects & Watershed Resilience
Bill Baugher, Watershed Management Division Manager
Beth Lewis, Water Quality Program Manager

As voted on during the March 28, 2024, meeting, WAPAC recommends that the Town of Bluffton pursue a new agreement with Beaufort County Government to implement the May River Watershed Action Plan Model Report within the County's jurisdiction of the May River Watershed.

This agreement should provide the framework for cooperation between the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to implement structural and non-structural programs to protect and restore shellfish harvesting and water quality in the May River.

This agreement should build upon previous agreements and partnership efforts. It should:

- **Acknowledge** the importance of the May River to both jurisdictions' social and economic well-being, the close connection between the quality of the May River and the environment and human health, and the need to address water quality impairments regionally.
- **Reaffirm** the Town of Bluffton's and Beaufort County's determination to protect, restore, and enhance water quality in the May River.
- **Emphasize** the need to strengthen efforts to address new and continuing threats to the quality of the May River, including but not limited to nutrients, climate change impacts, and loss of habitats and species.

- **Recognize** that the May River must be restored and protected because of its commerce and recreation benefits to the community.
- **Conclude** that the best way to preserve and improve water quality in the May River is to adopt common objectives, develop and implement cooperative programs, and take other compatible measures.

Within this agreement, the WAPAC believes that the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County should explore activities, programs, or strategies to address the following areas:

1. Septic to sewer/sewer projects
2. Wetland protections
3. Abandoned boats
4. County infrastructure projects - look at opportunities like Bridge Street water quality BMP
5. Tree protections
6. Trash haulers/litter
7. Stormwater credit for upgrading buffers around ponds

WAPAC believes that a new agreement with Beaufort County, if implemented, will help achieve the May River Watershed Action Plan objectives and protect shellfish harvesting in the May River.