

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Projects and Watershed Resilience Department



MEETING DATE:	May 14, 2024
PROJECT:	Consideration of the May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee's Recommendation for Town Council to Pursue a New Memorandum of Agreement with Beaufort County for Implementation of the May River Watershed Action Plan Throughout the May River Watershed
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

REQUEST: The May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC) requests Town Council consider their recommendation to pursue a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Beaufort County for Implementation of the May River Watershed Action Plan throughout the May River Watershed as outlined in the attached Memorandum (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND: At the August 24, 2023, meeting, WAPAC unanimously voted on a list of recommendations for Town Council's consideration to include in the Strategic Plan Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025. During the November 2, 2023, Town Council Strategic Planning Workshop, Council agreed to add the Memo of WAPAC's recommendations into the FY 2024-2025 Strategic Plan and to consider each WAPAC recommendation once prioritized and fully developed.

WAPAC prioritized "Establish an agreement with Beaufort County to implement the May River Watershed Action Plan (Action Plan) within the County's jurisdiction of the watershed for both structural stormwater projects and non-structural programs such as implementing the Green Print Map with the Rural & Critical Lands Program" as a Town Strategic Plan recommendation. At their March 28, 2024, meeting, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend Town Council pursue establishing a new MOA with Beaufort County for implementation of the May River Watershed Action Plan throughout the May River Watershed as outlined in Attachment 1.

NEXT STEPS: If Council agrees to implement WAPAC's recommendation:

- Staff will evaluate existing agreements with Beaufort County and pursue, as necessary, a new MOA with the elements outlined in the attached Memorandum titled "WAPAC Recommendation to Establish a New MOA with Beaufort County to Implement the May River Watershed Action Plan."
- Town Council considers authorizing a new MOA with Beaufort County to implement the May River Watershed Action Plan throughout the May River Watershed with the goal of improving water quality and protecting and restoring shellfish beds for the ecological and recreational functions and benefits in the May River.

SUMMARY: This project originated from the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan and WAPAC recommendations. It is supportive of the following guiding principles of the Town:

- Community Quality of Life #5. Foster town policies and practices that encourage environmentally conscious initiatives, policies and town codes that support a clean, well-maintained, sustainable community that protects our natural resources including the May River.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #1. Support initiatives, such as the May River Watershed Action Plan, to improve water quality of the May, Okatie/Colleton and New Rivers and their watersheds.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #2. Seek collaboration and partnerships that protect and improve the May, Okatie/Colleton and New Rivers and their watershed.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #4. Support active planning and management for resilience of natural resources and our response to weather events, future disasters and changing environmental conditions.

Consistent with these Guiding Principles, WAPAC is recommending Town Council pursue a new MOA with Beaufort County Government to implement the May River Watershed Action Plan throughout the May River Watershed. This MOA should provide the framework for cooperation between the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to implement structural and non-structural programs to improve water quality and protect and restore shellfish beds for the ecological and recreational functions and benefits in the May River and surrounding watersheds.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WAPAC Memorandum “WAPAC Recommendation to Establish a New MOA with Beaufort County to Implement the May River Watershed Action Plan”
2. Proposed Motion