



## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Town Council

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

RE: WAPAC Recommendation to Establish a New Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Beaufort County to Implement the May River Watershed Action Plan throughout the watershed

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

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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 Update and 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 improve water quality and protect and restore shellfish beds for the ecological and recreational functions and benefits in the May River and surrounding watersheds.

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

- **Acknowledge** the importance of the May River and surrounding watersheds 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 and surrounding watersheds.
- **Emphasize** the need to strengthen efforts to address new and continuing threats to the quality of the May River and surrounding watersheds, including but not limited to nutrients, climate change impacts, and loss of habitats and species.
- **Recognize** that the May River and surrounding watersheds 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 and surrounding watersheds 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. Fresh and saltwater wetland protections and restoration initiatives
3. Abandoned boats and structures
4. County infrastructure projects - look at opportunities like Bridge Street water quality Best Management Practice (BMP)
5. Tree protections
6. Trash haulers/litter
7. Stormwater credit for upgrading buffers around ponds
8. Resiliency-related initiatives
  - Nature-based solutions
9. Shellfish restoration initiatives

WAPAC believes that a new agreement with Beaufort County will help achieve the May River Watershed Action Plan objectives and protect shellfish beds for the ecological and recreational functions and benefits in the May River and surrounding watersheds.