



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

ONE CONSERVATION WAY · BRUNSWICK, GA 31520 · 912-264-7218

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**COASTAL MARSHLANDS PROTECTION ACT
STAFF'S FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

February 27, 2026

TO: Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee:
Mr. Brad Brookshire
Mr. Davis Poole
Dr. Valerie Hepburn
Mr. Bart Gobeil

FROM: Department Staff to the Committee

APPLICANT: River Street Market Landing, LLC
Captain John Claughton
P.O. Box 10186
Savannah, GA 31412

AGENT: Jeffrey P. Williams
Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.
31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B
Savannah, Georgia 31405

LOCATION: 504 East River Street, Savannah, Savannah River, Chatham County,
Georgia.

PROJECT: The proposed project is to modify and maintain an existing commercial
marina facility located on the Savannah River, Savannah, Chatham County,
Georgia.

ARMY CORPS NUMBER: 408-SAS-2025-0026

APPLICABLE LAW: O.C.G.A. §12-5-280 *et seq.*, as amended, Coastal Marshlands Protection
Act of 1970.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS: The public notice of the Coastal Marshlands
Protection Committee (CMPC) ran from January 14, 2026, through February 12, 2026. No
comments were received in response to the public notice.

FINDINGS: Department Staff to the CMPC make the following findings regarding this
application:

Project Scope and Justification: O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b): O.C.G.A § 12-5-286 (b)(8) requires a discussion of why the permit should be granted.

1. The existing commercial dock is home to Savannah Riverboat Cruises, Inc., which operates the Savannah River Queen (600 passengers). CMPA Permit #293 authorized the existing facility that includes a 260ft. x 10ft. 4-inch floating dock (2,686.67sq.ft.) seaward of the bulkhead.
2. There are twelve (12) existing 18-inch support piles (18sq.ft.). A 22ft. x 6ft. loading platform (132sq.ft.) extends from the upland and a 5ft. x 80ft (400sq.ft.) ADA compliant gangway provides passengers with access to moored vessels at the dock. Utilities service the existing facility. ADA accessible restrooms are located on River Street. There is no mooring on the landward side of the floating dock.
3. Total impacts for the existing commercial dock total 3,236.67sq.ft. (0.075 acre). The existing dock extends approximately 16ft. into the waterway at Mean Low Water (MLW), where the waterway is approximately 735ft. wide.
4. The applicant proposes to modify the in-water structure in phases. Phase 1 includes the replacement of the existing facility with a 260ft. x 16ft. floating dock (4,160sq.ft.). The twelve (12) existing 1.5ft. support piles (18sq.ft.) will remain. An additional eight (8) 2ft. steel pipe piles (16sq.ft.) will be installed. The 22ft. x 6ft. loading platform (132sq.ft.) extending from the upland and a 5ft. x 80ft. ADA compliant gangway (400sq.ft.) will remain and a second 20ft. x 6ft. loading platform (120sq.ft.) extending from the upland and a 6ft. x 80ft. ADA compliant gangway (480sq.ft.) will be installed.
5. There will be no mooring on the landward side of the floating dock. The proposed structure would extend 19ft. into the Savannah River at MLW at a location where the waterway is approximately 735ft. wide.
6. As proposed, existing impacts to CMPA jurisdiction associated with Phase 1 totals approximately 5,326sq.ft. (0.12 acre), and new impacts to CMPA jurisdiction associated with Phase 1 will total approximately 4,776sq.ft. (0.05 acre).
7. Phase 2 includes installation of 230ft. x 16ft. of new floating dock (3,680sq.ft.) that will be accessed by extending the existing 22ft. x 6ft. landing platform (132sq.ft.) by 11ft. x 6ft. (66sq.ft.) and an associated 80ft. x 6ft. gangway (960sq.ft.). Six (6) 2ft. steel piles (12sq.ft.) will secure the structure. Phase 1 and Phase 2 floating docks will be connected in water by a 12ft. x 15ft. floating dock (180sq.ft.) accessed by a 6ft. x 30ft. gangway (180sq.ft.). There will be no mooring on the landward side of the floating docks.
8. As proposed, new impacts to CMPA jurisdiction associated with Phase 2 will total approximately 5,036sq.ft. (0.12 acre).
9. Upon completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2, the in-water structure would extend 19ft. & 21ft. respectively into the Savannah River at MLW at a location that is 735ft. wide. The entire facility will be no closer than 79.5ft. to the southern limit of the federally maintained navigation channel. When Company tour boats are moored at the facility, their seaward beam will be no closer than 26ft. 11in. to the southern limit of the federally maintained navigation channel.
10. Total impacts to coastal marshlands for the proposed phased project are 9,812sq.ft. (0.23 acres).

Application Form, Applicant Name and Address, Project Plans, Plat, Deed or other instrument, Written permission to carry out project by owner of land, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(1-4):

11. Applicant has submitted the application form, name and address, project plans, plats, and deed.

Adjoining Landowners, Non-refundable application fee, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286 (b)(5,7):

12. Applicant has submitted names and addresses of adjoining property owners as well as the non-refundable application fee.

Local Government Zoning, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(6):

13. A letter has been received from the Planning and Urban Design Department for the City of Savannah, Georgia stating that the proposed project does not violate any local zoning laws. The letter is not conditioned.

Alternative Sites Description and Feasibility 12-5-286 (b)(8):

14. The proposed project is sited at an existing commercial facility and has been modified to minimize impacts to CMPA jurisdiction.

Landfill, Hazardous Waste Inquiry, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(9):

15. Applicant has reviewed the Hazardous Site Index maintained by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for Chatham County, Georgia and stated that there are no landfills or hazardous waste sites on or near the proposed project location.

Water Quality Certification, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(10):

16. Water Quality Certification is not required for the project.

Adherence to Erosion and Sediment Control Responsibilities, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286 (b)(11):

17. Applicant has stated their intention to adhere to building, land disturbing and storm-water management permit as required by Local Issuing Authority.

Notification of Proposed Project, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(d)(e):

18. The public notice of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee (CMPC) ran from January 14, 2026, through February 12, 2026. No comments were received in response to the public notice.

Public Interest Considerations, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(g):

19. In passing upon application for a permit, the CMPC shall consider the public interest.

- a. **The design of the project is such that no unreasonably harmful obstruction to or alteration of the natural flow of navigational water within the affected area will arise as a result of the proposal.** At Mean Low Water (MLW) the Savannah River is 735ft. wide at this location. The proposed in-water structure would extend 19ft. & 21ft. respectively into the Savannah River. The entire facility will be no closer than 79.5ft. to the southern limit of the federally maintained navigation channel. When Company tour boats are moored at the facility, their seaward beam will be no closer than 26ft. 11in. to the southern limit of the federally maintained navigation channel. No unreasonably harmful obstruction to, or alteration of, the natural flow of navigational water is expected as a result of the proposed project.
- b. **The design of the project is such that no unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of the channels, or stagnant areas of water will be created.** As proposed, the project is a pile supported dock and no dredging is required. The proposed project will not unreasonably harm or increase erosion, shoaling of the channels, or create stagnant areas of water.
- c. **The proposal will not unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, and clams or any marine life or wildlife or other natural resources including but not limited to water and oxygen supply.** The proposed project will not

unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, and clams or any marine life or wildlife or other natural resources including but not limited to water and oxygen supply. The West Indian Manatee is an endangered and federally protected species and is known to frequent Georgia's coastal waters.

Leasing of state owned marshland or water bottoms, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-287:

20. A waterbottoms lease is required for the proposed project.

Restriction on granting of permits; size restriction; activities and structures considered contrary to the public interest, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-288 (a):

21. The proposed project is an expansion of an existing commercial facility. The proposed floating docks are water dependent structures and cannot be satisfied using an alternative non-marshland site. Total impacts to coastal marshlands for the proposed phased project are 9,812sq.ft. (0.23 acres).

O.C.G.A. § 12-5-288(b) requires that the amount of marshlands to be altered are minimum in size.

22. The project will replace structures on site and is designed to minimize impacts to coastal marshlands.

Determining Project Boundaries, Rule 391-2-3-.02(3):

23. The marshlands component of the project includes the proposed installation of floating docks.

24. The applicant has stated that the project does not contain an upland component.

Regulation of Marinas, Community Docks and Commercial Docks, Rule 391-2-3-.03

25. The proposed facility is considered a Marina in accordance with O.C.G.A. 391-2-3-.03 "Regulation of Marinas, Community Docks and Commercial Docks."

RECOMMENDATION: Should the Committee determine that the proposed project is in the public interest, Department staff recommends the following **STANDARD and SPECIAL conditions:**

COASTAL MARSHLANDS PROTECTION ACT STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. The project must comply, as applicable, for areas permitted herein, with all other federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, and regulations and the applicant must obtain all licenses and permits prior to commencement of construction.
2. This permit does not resolve actual or potential disputes regarding ownership of, rights in or over the property upon which the subject project is proposed, and shall not be construed as recognizing or denying any such rights or interests.
3. All plans, documents, and materials contained in this permit application, required by Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970, as amended O.C.G.A. § 12-5-280 et seq. are a part of this permit and conformance to such plans, documents, and materials are a condition of this permit. No change or deviation from these plans, documents, and materials shall be permitted without prior notification and approval by the Department or CMPC.
4. No further encroachment or construction shall take place within state jurisdiction, except as permitted by the CMPC. Any modification of the plans or structure in the jurisdictional area must be reviewed and approved by the Department or the CMPC, as necessary, prior to construction.

5. No construction or alteration of a project may commence until the expiration of 30 days following the date on which the application is approved; provided however that if a timely appeal is filed, no construction or alteration may commence until all administrative and judicial proceedings are terminated.
6. The permit must be posted onsite within twenty-four (24) hours of beginning construction.
7. A copy of these and all permit conditions must be supplied to the person in charge of construction. All contractors and subcontractors are responsible for strict adherence to all permit conditions.
8. All Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be used to prevent any erosion and sedimentation at the site. No equipment, materials, or debris may be placed in, disposed of, or stored in jurisdictional areas. Any visible alterations in the marsh topography will be restored immediately using low-impact hand tools. Any damage to the marsh vegetation that has not recovered naturally during the next growing season will be repaired by a method acceptable to the Department.
9. If the permitted improvements are damaged, fall into disrepair, become dilapidated, or are not meeting their expected usefulness and are not maintained at a serviceable level, it is the responsibility of the owner to remove the improvements. A new permit will be required to retain and repair the structure, improvement, or asset if it loses its structural integrity and is no longer serviceable.
10. The CMPC is not bound in the future to protect any improvement or asset authorized by the permit.

COASTAL MARSHLANDS PROTECTION ACT
STANDARD CONDITIONS FOR MARINAS

1. Floating docks may not rest on the bottom at low tide and must be supported on pilings or by cradle at least two feet above the mud.
2. The marina proposed to be located in a manatee travel corridor or on a waterway where manatees may be found must have protective measures to minimize manatee/boat interactions to include:
 - a. An education plan for boaters using the marina;
 - b. Regular monthly maintenance of dock facilities' hoses, faucets, or any apparatus or equipment capable of producing a stream of fresh water in close proximity to the access of the facility;
 - c. A contingency plan for emergency repair of freshwater sources;
 - d. Temporary manatee awareness signage during construction of the facility and permanent posting and maintenance of the informational display signage, "Manatee Basics for Boater's" post-construction; and
 - e. Speed zones may be required if the marina is in a manatee travel corridor.
3. No dredging of tidal waterbottoms or vegetated coastal marshlands is allowed in association with the initial marina project.
4. If the marina could require maintenance dredging in the future, a permanent, dedicated spoil site with the capacity for the initial dredge volume and anticipated maintenance needs must be identified at the time of application.
5. The marina should provide onshore restrooms, shower and laundry facilities in the upland component of the project. The applicant/permittee must take specific measures (such as, but not limited to, signs or dock regulations) to encourage boaters to use the washrooms, laundromat and restrooms onshore, if any.
6. The marina must have an approved disposal system for the disposal of wastewater generated by boats and upland facilities at the marina.

7. The marina must install, for collection of solid wastes, trashcans, dumpsters or other suitable containers in compliance with the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (33 USCA 1901 and 33 CFR 158). Adequate separate containers for toxic substances shall be available.
8. The marina shall not allow any person to operate a marine toilet at a marina at any time so as to cause or permit to pass or to be discharged into the waters adjacent to the marina any untreated sewage or other waste matter or contaminant of any kind.
 - a. A marina must have a working pump-out facility and dockside waste collection system for the sanitary wastes from vessels adequate for the capacity of the marina (number and size of vessels) and require their use by boats using the marina, unless specific exceptions are allowed by the Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee.
 - b. Pump-out facility maintenance logs must be kept.
 - c. The marina must prominently display signage showing the location of the nearest pump-out facility.
9. If fueling facilities are installed the applicant/permittee must insure installation is according to the USEPA and GADNR/EPD laws and regulations. The following requirements must be met:
 - a. Fuel storage tanks and fuel lines between tank, dock, and vessels shall be equipped with emergency shut off valves.
 - b. Dispensing nozzles shall be the automatic closing type without a hold-open latch.
 - c. A marina must have adequate booms available either on-site or under contract to contain any oil spill.
 - d. The marina shall have a current 'Operations Manual' containing the following:
 - i. Description of how the applicant meets the conditions of this permit,
 - ii. The geographic location of the dock,
 - iii. A physical description of the facility showing mooring areas, fuel storage and dispensing areas, and locations of safety equipment,
 - iv. The names and telephone numbers of the facility, Coast Guard MSO, EPD Emergency Response Center, and other personnel who may be called by employees of the facility in an emergency, including fire and police,
 - v. A description and the location of each emergency shut-off system, and
 - vi. Names and telephone numbers of available hazardous spill clean-up contractors nearest the dock.
10. The Operation Manual must be maintained current and readily available in a conspicuous location for examination by employees of the dock and the Department.
11. The Operations Manual must be submitted to the Department prior to operation of the dock.
12. All components of the marina must be designed, installed, operated and maintained in a manner that will not unreasonably obstruct navigation to and from neighboring properties.
13. The marina or its operation shall not cause or create a measurable adverse water quality impact to the waterbody in which it is built, as measured by dissolved oxygen, fecal bacteria, or nutrient enrichment.
14. If the Department determines through its own water quality sampling or other resource analyses that there are perceptible environmental impacts associated with the dock development, the Department may require the applicant/permittee at applicant/permittee's expense, to have water, substrate, and/or tissue samples collected and analyzed for metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, or other constituents.
 - a. Sample collection and analyses must be according to methods approved by the Department.
 - b. All results from such sampling results must be provided to the Department as obtained and may be used by the Department to further restrict the dock to reduce water quality impacts.

15. The permittee shall permanently post and maintain the informational display sign, "Manatee Basics for Boaters." Instructions for the installation and placement procedure of this sign are enclosed.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Signage identifying the floating dock for the sole use of Savannah Riverboat Cruises, Inc. must be posted on site and visible to mariners from the Savannah River.
2. The permittee shall notify the Department if there are any changes in the use or users of the dock, to include recreational mooring.
3. Upon completion of construction of the permitted project, permittee must contact the Department for a waterbottoms lease prior to operation of the new facility.
4. Permittee is required to provide a post-construction survey that locates the marshlands component of the project. Such survey shall comply with the Georgia Plat Act O.C.G.A. 15-6-67 *et seq.*