

Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Minutes

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

VA Department of Forestry, Charlottesville, VA

Minutes by David Buckalew

Steering Committee representatives attending:

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) – Leslie Middleton
Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) – Katie Register
Ferrum College (FC) – Carolyn Thomas
James River Association (JRA) – Chuck Frederickson
Longwood University (LWU) – David Buckalew
People Protecting Watershed Headwaters (PPWH) – Jim Disbrow
United States Geological Survey (USGS) – Karen Rice
United States Marine Corps, Quantico Base (USMC) – Nikki Bennett
University of Virginia (UVA) – Susie Maben (for Rick Webb)
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) – Dana Roberts
Virginia Citizens for Water Quality (VCWQ) – Jessica Schildroth
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Darryl Glover and Stuart Torbeck
Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOT) – Sam Austin
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Dan Dietrich
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) – Steve Begg
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:

County of Henrico, Department of Public Works (HDPW)
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III
Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAgC)
Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agency (VAMWA)
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
Virginia Municipal League (VML)
Virginia Rural Water Association (VRWA)
Virginia Water Well Association (VWWA)

Committee Chairs attending:

Identity/Communications Subcommittee – Steve Begg, Nikki Bennett, Jim Disbrow
Membership Subcommittee – Lyle Varnell
Education – Dana Roberts
Finance – Katie Register
Groundwater – Jessica Schildroth
Operations – Sam Austin

Guests:

Interested citizen from Nelson County – Jack McNish

Mr. Chuck Frederickson (JRA), 2006 VWMC Chair, led the May VWMC Steering Committee meeting. All present verbally provided their name and affiliation to the VWMC. The meeting's agenda was examined and adopted as written. A couple typographical errors occurred in the March 06 minutes – on pg 4, the word “commented” was corrected to “committed” and the Chair of the Education Committee was incorrect as written; Dana Roberts (VASWCD) serves in that capacity.

Financial Report:

Jane Walker distributed the report showing a balance of \$8,863. This balance includes the recently awarded \$6,315 project funds from VA DEQ for purchasing Water Monitoring Day kits and supporting the VWMC's marketing and educational activities and funds from VDH for \$4,900.

Old Business:

1) Conference Planning Subcommittee of the Education Committee:

Discussion continued on a proposed subcommittee assigned the task of planning the annual VWMC Conference. It was decided that the Operations and Education committees be altered somewhat from their current responsibilities relative to planning the VWMC Conference.

The Operations Committee will:

- support and track implementation of the strategic plan developed in 2005
- plan the 2006 Steering Committee meetings

The Education Committee will:

- contain a subcommittee (Conference Planning Subcommittee) dedicated to planning the VWMC Annual Conference

2) 2006 VWMC Workplan

Sam Austin (VDOP) distributed the 2006 workplan to the committee chairs for suggested changes and final approval. The workplan will be discussed at the July meeting of the Steering Committee

3) Marketing the VWMC

Over the last several Steering Committee meetings and intervening period, there has been much attention and effort to our new marketing plan and strategy. The committee discussed the topic at length addressing the following items:

- To what degree do we want to use a new logo?
- Do we want to continue with the old logo since it has not built enough equity of exposure?
- Which logo works best for VWMC?
- Could we use two logos?

The topic of the VWMC logo was tabled until the next meeting to be confident of group support.

There was general acceptance among those present for the new slogan, “Know water?”

4) Feedback on Environment Virginia at VMI – April 18-20

Chuck Frederickson (JRA) announced there was a high amount of traffic to the VWMC booth – the conference is a good choice for exposure to the environmental public. It was agreed that VWMC would contact everyone who left business cards at our exhibit booth. Chuck was joined by Alecia Daves and Robin Buckalew, staff members from PSWCD located in Farmville, to aid in staffing the booth. Robin supplied a general report of ways to improve upon our booth presentation for future displays.

5) James River Fish Festival – downtown Richmond, VA – Earth Day 2006 (April 22)

Stuart Torbeck (DEQ) reported both good news and bad news from this year's event:

-good news: there were approximately 1,000 in attendance

DEQ sponsored 5 events with the help of 6 volunteers

-bad news: torrential rain! Because the event was held outside and it was raining, the VWMC did not set up its display.

New Business:

1) Letter of Agreement (LOA) between ACB/DCR/DEQ/IWLA VaSOS – The Va Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Program:

A draft of the letter of agreement between state and citizen monitoring programs was distributed by Darryl Glover (DEQ) for comment. All steering committee members agreed that the document faithfully supports volunteer water monitoring efforts in Virginia and accurately describes the responsibilities of the VWMC. A meeting of the signatories is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2006. Chuck Frederickson will represent the VWMC at this meeting.

2) 2006 VWMC Conference:

The committee was split on whether to have the meeting on Wednesday, October 11 or on Thursday, October 12. Therefore, the group decided to see if Robin Wilder (HDPW) has a preference of dates since she is the primary contact for use of the Henrico Training Center. The choice of a meeting theme was briefly discussed but was left open for future consideration.

Committee Reports:

Operations: Sam Austin (VDOF) distributed the 2006 VWMC Workplan.

Inventory: Darryl Glover (DEQ) reported on behalf of James Beckley. On April 28, the Inventory Committee held a conference call that focused on the following:

- The next update of the VWMC GIS map will occur this summer. Cleo Stevens was hired in April to replace Roland Owens as the DEQ Water Monitoring and Assessment Program GIS and web-page developer. Once the 2006 305(b)/303(d) reports are completed, James will work with Cleo to update the VWMC map. This update will contain 176 additional monitoring entries covering all but three counties in Virginia.
- There was some discussion about updating the information found on the VWMC inventory database. The Inventory Committee would like to ask the Communications Committee for assistance. With the help of members from both committee members, each person would contact about 10 groups to confirm their contact information. Updates will be forwarded to the Inventory Committee Chair to post in the database. In preparation for updating the GIS map, it would be preferable to complete updating of the inventory by the end of June or early July.
- There was some discussion on the conference call regarding the new DEQ non-agency database now under development. The database will allow DEQ to store and query data in a similar fashion to DEQ monitoring data. The possibility exists to link the VWMC GIS map to this new DEQ database. This could allow the VWMC and users access to actual site data without having the VWMC to have to warehouse data. A decision on this

will need to be made by early summer because the programmer will complete the project in September.

Marketing: (See Old Business)

Finance: Katie Register (CVW) will electronically solicit a voluntary appeal for dues to the VWMC. Katie happily reported that the VWMC was now operating in the black and that she has scheduled an appointment with the Director of Corporate Giving at Phillip Morris to discuss possible funding ties. Jim Disbrow (PPWH) suggested that VWMC possibly contact Charity Works for funding.

Education: Dana Roberts (VASWCD) announced that the VWMC plans to help coordinate Water Monitoring Day events across the state. The VWMC plans to work with Chesterfield County schools again this year for Water Monitoring Day activities in the Richmond area.

The newly formed **Conference Planning Subcommittee** of the Education Committee will consist of: Robin Wilder (HDPW), Jane Walker (VWRRC), Stuart Torbeck (DEQ), Jessica Schildroth (VCWQ) Jim Disbrow (PPWH), and others. Some discussion of general items related to this year's event ensued. Jane mentioned that the morning sessions of our annual conference typically center around regulatory issues with technologies covered in the afternoon. Some thematic ideas for this year's conference were suggested. Among these were:

- threats to water quality (e.g., mine drainage, acid deposition, stormwater runoff, emerging contaminants...)
- watersheds with proactive TMDL plans
- categories of water analysis

Katie Register (CVW) mentioned that 2006 is the "Year of Water Stewardship" for Rotary Club organizations and may possibly be a source of funding for the conference.

Groundwater: Jessica Schildroth (VCWQ) has performed a yeoman's job in gathering information on groundwater quality and producing an electronic inventory for those having data on groundwater. Possible contacts for this database may include: Eugene Powell at the DEQ Office in Charlottesville, the Extension Office at Virginia Tech, and the various RC&D offices throughout VA.

DEQ updates:

- **May 25 Letter of Agreement Meeting-** DEQ will host a meeting between DEQ, DCR, Save Our Streams (SOS), ACB, VWMC, and the new Virginia Citizens for Water Quality to update a preexisting letter of agreement ratified in 2002.
- **Non-agency Database-** DEQ is still working with the programmer from EASI to develop a database to store data from citizen monitoring groups, non-DEQ government agencies, and private businesses. Development is progressing on schedule and the database should be ready for the public by September of 2006. DEQ will offer training sessions for citizen monitoring grant recipients and other selected groups in September. A brief discussion about the database will take place after the LOA meeting on May 25.
- **Non-DEQ Biological Guidance-** DEQ is in the process of developing guidance to help citizen, and other non-DEQ entities to submit benthic macroinvertebrate data for DEQ use, including 305(b)/303(d) Water Quality Assessment. The tiered rating of biological data will be similar to that for water chemistry. A discussion on the draft guidance will also follow the May 25 LOA meeting.

