

Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Minutes

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

VA Dept of Forestry, Charlottesville, VA

Steering Committee representatives attending:

Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) – Katie Register

County of Henrico, Department of Public Works (HDPW) – Robin Wilder

Ferrum College (FC) – Carolyn Thomas

Longwood University (LWU) – David Buckalew

People Protecting Watershed Headwaters (PPWH) – Jim Disbrow

United States Geological Survey (USGS) – Karen Rice

Virginia Citizens for Water Quality (VCWQ) – Karen Andersen

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) – James Beckley, Darryl Glover, Stuart Torbeck

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 (VWRRRC) – Stephen Schoenholtz, Jane Walker

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB)

James River Association (JRA)

Newport News Waterworks (NNW)

University of Virginia (UVA)

Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)

Committee Chairs attending:

Education

Finance – Katie Register

Groundwater

Inventory – James Beckley

Marketing – Steve Begg, Jim Disbrow

Membership – Lyle Varnell

Operations

Welcome and Introduction: Since the Council has been unsuccessful in finding a person willing or able to serve as Chair for 2007, Mr. Lyle Varnell (VIMS), past VWMC Chair, led the June VWMC Steering Committee, calling order at 11:10 a.m. in the 1st floor conference room at the VDOF Building in Charlottesville. All Steering Committee members present verbally provided their name and affiliation. One new face – Karen Andersen (with Friends of the Shenandoah River, representing VCWQ) was introduced and welcomed to the VWMC Steering Committee. Jane Walker announced that because of a loss of funding, the Virginia Rural Water

Association can no longer send representatives to the VWMC Steering Committee meetings and have thus asked to be removed from the committee.

Approval of Agenda: The meeting's agenda was examined and adopted as written.

Approval of the January 25, 2007 Meeting Minutes: The minutes were approved as written.

Financial Report:

Jane Walker (VWRRC) distributed a financial statement covering the period January 26 to June 20, 2007. As of Jan 25, 2007, a balance of \$4,100 was reported. After all income and expenses were posted for the period, the balance as of June 20, 2007 is (-\$1,684). A proposal of \$4,900 is pending from VDH.

Old Business:

1) Train-the-trainer Rain Barrel Workshop:

Katie Register (CVW) has found that by training rain-barrel-workshop trainers, she has been able to geometrically increase the impact of her efforts in introducing this water saving technique to the citizens of VA. Most of her workshops have provided free tuition to participants due to outside monetary support. The VWMC co-sponsored a train-the-trainer rain barrel workshop in May 2007 by providing \$1,000 of support from educational monies secured from the 2007 VDEQ Citizen's Monitoring Grant. The next workshop is to be held in VA's "northern neck" region on Saturday, June 30. Another train-the-trainer workshop is to be held in Farmville in August 2007 was also voted to receive support from the same VDEQ grant. Carolyn Thomas (FC) mentioned that water collected in rain barrels can be used in myriad different ways – a community swimming pool in Ferrum, VA is being filled with the help of rain barrel collections!

2) Leadership of VWMC (and the role of VWRRC):

a) **Steering Committee Officer Nominations/Elections:** At this time, the VWMC lacks a person willing or able to be Chair for 2007. Chuck Frederickson (JRA) has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair and David Buckalew (LWU) has agreed to serve a 2nd year as Secretary. Lyle Varnell's request for nominations for a Chair met with no response from the Steering Committee members present.

It was generally agreed that each person's daily workload has precluded time for taking on additional "service" work. However, the general feeling among everyone present was a strong desire to participate, investigate, and communicate for the betterment of our VA waters. As one committee member aptly stated, "given our membership, we serve as a very important link in the chain of water information for citizen volunteers." Yet, at this time we are incapable of finding a Chair who has the time and energy to submit to the needs of the office and to guide the group's activities.

This situation led to a lengthy discussion among the Steering Committee that included the following major points:

- a) **Council hibernation:** The significant role that VWRRC has played in the operation and logistics of the Council is not sustainable (see January 25, 07 minutes, New Business, Item 3). Since efforts to find a Chair for 2007 have been unsuccessful, it was unanimously agreed that the VWMC cancel plans of activity beyond December 2007 and cancel the remaining Steering Committee meetings for the year. At a future time, members will agree to: 1) continue the VWMC as it currently functions; 2) continue the VWMC, but in a different way than present; or 3) allow the VWMC to cease to exist.
- b) **Operations Committee overview:** For the time being and in the months ahead, members of the Operations Committee will periodically convene to work out plans to accomplish outstanding obligations. During this time, any member(s) of the Steering Committee can present issues to the VWMC as they see fit by contacting any/all of the members of the Operations Committee. (A copy of the names and contact information for all standing committee members is attached to these minutes.)
- c) **Continuation of marketing activities:** Approximately 50% of the VWMC brochures, magnets, bumper stickers, etc. are still available and will be used as advertisement at the variety of water events forthcoming in the remainder of the year.
- d) **Meeting VDEQ Citizen Monitoring Grant obligations:**
 - a. Budgeted money to purchase 120-135 World Water Monitoring Kits for the Sept 18, 2007 World Water Monitoring Month activity. (about \$2,000)
 - b. Budget money to support two (2) rain barrel workshops organized by CVW (about \$1,600 - \$1,800)
 - c. Budgeted money to aid in sponsoring the EPA Region III Conference to be held at Shenandoah University, October 12 and 13, 2007. (\$1,000)
 - d. Budgeted money to cover additional marketing needs. (\$200)
 - e. Submit final report for the 2007 VDEQ grant by December 31, 2007.

New Business:

1) VDEQ Citizen Monitoring Grant 2008 proposals – due August 2007:

James Beckley (VDEQ) mentioned that RFP's for the 2008 awards are to go out on Monday, July 2 with a submission deadline set for August 31. The grant period shall cover the time between January 1 and December 31, 2008. This year's RFP is slightly different in that it will include a Use Authorization Form for Water Quality Data asking each grant applicant to select up to five (5) possible options for use of the citizen water data. The VWMC decided to apply for a 2008 grant that will request money for World Water Monitoring Day kits and marketing the VWMC. The VWMC agreed to remain "active" until these grant obligations are met.

2) 2007 VWMC Conference:

As a direct consequence of the issues within the VWMC stated above, the impetus for either an independent Fall VWMC Conference or one coincident with the EPA Region III at Shenandoah University in October was removed from the table. A motion of monetary support (\$1,000) for the EPA Conference was discussed and unanimously agreed upon by all Steering Committee members present. The VWMC also agreed to help find two speakers for the conference.

3) Suggestion to merge standing committees of the VWMC:

At this time, the suggestion to merge Marketing and Finance committees and to combine Inventory, Communications, and Outreach was tabled for later discussion.

Committee Reports:

Operations: Jessica Schildroth has graciously agreed to volunteer her time to help Jane with coordination efforts for the VWMC.

Inventory: Other than our yearly conference meetings and the years of educational contributions and support for volunteer water monitoring for the state of Virginia, this single repository of water data is the most tangible deliverable product produced and supported by the VWMC. The surface water inventory is currently available at: <http://gisweb.deq.virginia.gov/vwmc>. James Beckley reported that VDEQ is willing to continue hosting the inventory, even if the VWMC ceases to exist.

Marketing: Identity and Communications: No report other than earlier discussions re: Continuation of Marketing Activities (see Old Business, Item 2 c.).

Membership. No report.

Finance: See earlier report from Jane Walker (VWRRRC). Katie Register (CVW) posed an interesting and important question appropriate for the time that asked how the VWMC could go about retiring our debt to the VWRRRC, which is currently at \$1,684. The issue was tabled for later discussion.

Education: No report.

Groundwater: No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Darryl Glover (VDEQ) reported that next week (June 25th) final guidance would be released which would begin the real work for staff to begin preparing the 2008 Water Quality Report (305[b]/303[d] report) to the USEPA.

Future meeting dates will be determined. Members of the Operations Committee will soon meet via conference call to discuss any/all possibilities.

Lyle Varnell adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.