

## Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Minutes

Monday, March 03, 2008

USGS, Richmond, VA

### **Steering Committee representatives attending:**

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) – Laurel Woodworth

Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) – Katie Register

Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) – Matt Ellinghaus

Longwood University (LWU) – David Buckalew

People Protecting Watershed Headwaters (PPWH) – Jim Disbrow

United States Geological Survey (USGS) – Sam Austin

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) – Dana Roberts

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) – James Beckley

Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell

Virginia Save Our Streams (VSOS) – Stacey Brown

Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker

### **Organizations without a representative at the meeting:**

County of Henrico, Department of Public Works (HDPW)

Ferrum College (FC)

James River Association (JRA)

Newport News Waterworks (NNW)

University of Virginia (UVA)

Virginia Citizens for Water Quality (VCWQ)

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

**1) Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order by Sam Austin, Chair of the Operations Committee, at 12:40 pm in the conference room of the USGS offices in Richmond, VA

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

**3) Approval of the June 20, 2007 minutes:** One correction was found – that of the website address for the VWMC surface water inventory on the VA DEQ webpage is currently found at: <http://gisweb.deq.virginia.gov/vwmc> Omit “viewer.htm” at the end of the web address as stated in earlier minutes.

**4) Financial Report:** Jane Walker (VWRRC) distributed two financial reports. One covered the previous year period leading up to our last meeting covering the period between July 1, 2006 and June 20, 2007. On June 20, 2007 we showed a negative balance of \$1,684 with a proposal pending with VDH for \$4,900.

The second report covered the time period of July 1, 2007 to the present. Assuming that the VWRRC will cover any administrative losses for FY 2007, the VWMC budget for

FY 2008 began with a balance of \$0. Jane stated she would check with Stephen Schoenholtz, director of the VWRRC, to make certain the coverage of administration for the VWMC by the VWRRC was acceptable for FY 2007.

The VDH grant was awarded in FY2008 and used to cover administrative expenses for the VWMC. Funding from two grants, DEQ-Citizen Monitoring Grant (\$6,000) and Philip Morris USA (\$10,000), have made funds available for projects in FY 2008.

Thus far, expenses charged to the DEQ-Citizen Monitoring Grant include payment to

- LaMotte for World Water Monitoring Day kits,
- Micrology Labs for Coliscan gel supplies for distribution at a workshop as part of the VWMC co-sponsored conference in Winchester,
- Speaker travel to the Winchester conference
- Clean VA Waterways for two rainbarrel workshops.

The remaining funding from the DEQ grant will be used to purchase World Water Monitoring Day kits for the 2008 event.

No funds have been spent from the Philip Morris grant, which is to cover training for SOS monitors, two rain barrel workshops, and water monitoring kits for World Water Monitoring Day.

Subtracting total administrative and project expenses from total administrative and project income for FY 2008 equals \$10,901.

**5) Old Business:** As related to Item 2 under Old Business in June 20, 2007 minutes - although meeting all outstanding grant obligations and attracting additional grant support, the VWMC has experienced a discontinuation of formalized meetings pending a decision among Steering Committee members to find a new group Chair. After some discussion, several votes were considered that related to a return to normal activities among those present.

#### **Operations Committee:**

Item #1: A recommendation was considered for the continuation of the Council. Of the ten returning steering committee members present, all ten voted to continue the Council.

Item #2: Several members of the Steering Committee agreed to serve as VWMC officers for the coming year. An appeal for additional candidate choices for the offices of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary was voiced with no additional names offered. Each of the candidate choices received unanimous support from the committee members present.

VWMC Steering Committee officers for the next year will be:

- Dan Dietrich (VDH) – Chair
- Stacey Brown (VSOS) – Vice Chair
- David Buckalew (LWU) – Secretary

#### **6) New Business:**

**a) Election of Steering Committee members for 2008-2011 term:** Five new and continuing members to the Steering Committee were identified and unanimously elected to three-year (2008-2011) terms. These individuals include:

- Stacey Brown – VA Save Our Streams
- Weedon Cloe – Chesterfield County Dept of Environmental Engineering
- Joanna Cornell – N. VA Soil and Water Conservation District
- Bill Lakel – VA Dept of Forestry
- Stephen Schoenholtz – VA Water Resources Research Center

**b) Determine relationship of Steering Committee with subcommittees:**

Since recent VWMC subcommittees have found it difficult to meet, several ideas were suggested which would suspend the regular committee structure of the VWMC and temporarily present a new approach to the activities of the organization so that we could collectively focus our energies per each activity. Three different approaches were discussed and considered for adoption at this time. They include:

Option A: No change, continue with subcommittees as currently organized

Option B: Continue with Steering Committee and Operations Committee, suspend all other subcommittees. Use ad-hoc committees to implement VWMC activities

Option C: Continue with Steering Committee, suspend all other subcommittees. Use ad-hoc committees to implement VWMC committees.

Option B was generally agreed to be the best option for the Steering Committee to take at this time as it seems to be a more organized approach to the activities of the VWMC. Since the role of the VWMC is to communicate and coordinate water monitoring efforts within Virginia and to provide a site where those interested in such activity can network with others.

A vote was tallied and Option B won by a 9-2 vote. Option C received 2 votes of support. At this time, we agreed to continue with the Steering and Operations Committees, to suspend the subcommittee structure of the Council and

**c) Decision on the host/format of the VWMC website:**

Our current website provider [www.vwmc.org](http://www.vwmc.org) links directly to our much longer URL on the VaTech server at a cost of \$30 per year. Using this link seems to work very well for the present and the cost is not prohibitive.

It was unanimously agreed that our website needs to be updated. It was decided that we should update its design using the VaTech template. The committee discussed the many benefits for handling the website through VaTech.

Since our website needs significant updates, it was suggested that website design could be handled by an ad-hoc committee. Several questions arose concerning webpage

size/volume limitations, money available for a webmaster, the need for a counter on our page, and the need for a link to Jane's weekly water-related announcements.

## **7) Announcements:**

### **a. DEQ updates:**

- 1- website for our monitoring database is:  
<http://www.gisweb.deq.virginia.gov> James Beckley (VDEQ) mentioned that he hoped to keep yearly updates of community monitoring efforts throughout the state.
- 2- calendar of community activities will be circulated soon which will be available for interested citizens – for more information contact Stuart Torbeck.
- 3- SOS validation with DEQ techniques to begin on high quality streams soon
- 4- citizen nominations for DEQ monitoring sites are due by April 30
- 5- posting of VDGIF fish advisory signage to be adopted by citizens – interested persons should contact Stuart Torbeck
- 6- state's 305B report will be delayed until late April
- 7- there will be possible further reductions to the DEQ budget – not yet known degree of effects upon monitoring activity
- 8- DEQ's participation in World Water Monitoring Day activities this year will be coordinated by Stuart Torbeck

### **b. Clean VA Waterways:**

The VWMC will sponsor two rain barrel workshops in Richmond with funding from Phillip Morris – tentatively, one in May and one in June

### **c. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay:**

The summer VCWQ summit will again be scheduled for mid to late July at UVa

## **8) Establish frequency of meetings:**

The Steering Committee voted to meet in two months (May) and then start a quarterly meeting schedule.

Our next meeting could be at USGS-Richmond if we agree to meet Monday, May 5. Other meeting possibilities agreed by most members present included either Thursday, May 8 or Monday, May 12.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.