

Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Minutes
Monday, May 05, 2008
USGS, Richmond, VA

Steering Committee representatives attending:

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) – Anna Mathis, Chris French
Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) – Katie Register
Chesterfield County, Department of Environmental Engineering (CDEE) – Weedon Cloe
Longwood University (LWU) – David Buckalew
Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) – Joanna Cornell
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) – James Beckley
Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) – Bill Lakel
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Dan Dietrich (**Chair**)
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) – Steve Begg
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell
Virginia Save Our Streams (VSOS) – Stacey Brown
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker, Stephen Schoenholtz

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)
United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)
Virginia Citizens for Water Quality (VCWQ)
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)

1) Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was called to order by Dan Dietrich, newly installed Chair of the Steering Committee, at 12:30 pm in the conference room of the USGS offices in Richmond, VA. Three new individuals were introduced - Joanna Cornell representing the N. Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Weedon Cloe, from the Chesterfield County Office of Environmental Engineering, and Bill Lakel, from the Virginia Department of Forestry along with the other returning members of the Council.

2) Approval of Agenda: The meeting's agenda was examined and one additional line item was added regarding the scheduling of the next meeting.

3) Approval of the March 3, 2008 minutes: The minutes were approved as written.

4) Financial Report: Jane Walker distributed a financial report which covered the period from July 1, 2007 to the present day. The VWMC budget for FY 2008 began with a balance of \$0.

A VDH grant was awarded in FY2008 and used to cover administrative expenses for the VWMC. Funding from two grants, the DEQ-Citizen Monitoring Grant (\$6,000; of which, ~\$755 remains for water monitoring kits) and Philip Morris USA (\$10,000; to cover costs associated with SOS monitors training, two CVW rainbarrel workshops, and some WWMD water monitoring kits), have made funds available for projects in FY 2008.

Subtracting total administrative and project expenses from total administrative and project income for FY 2008 equals \$8,125 as of May 5, 2008.

5) Old Business:

Item A: The VWMC website (<http://www.vwrrc.vt.edu/vwmc>):

Jane distributed a handout which provided an overview of the content of the VWMC website, with some new ideas proposed for website layout and content. A new Reference Materials section is under construction with detailed information on water monitoring. A general discussion ensued related to website additions, subtractions, and timely updates.

-Stacey suggested that we link VDEQ updates and “Jane’s weekly announcements” onto the website.

-James requested that we expand and update all links to the site.

-Dan suggested some new photos be obtained for the site.

A motion was approved to form an Ad Hoc committee to work on refurbishing the VWMC website. Several members of the Steering committee, including James Beckley (Chair), Stacey Brown, Joanna Cornell, Steve Begg, Jane Walker, and Dan Dietrich agreed to work on the project.

Item B: VWMC Administrative Tasks

Since there are no standing committees for the Council, several job tasks need to be delegated among the members of the Steering Committee and not left by default on Jane’s desk.

Generally, tasks such as the **weekly announcement** postings and updates to the **membership rolls** represent the most chronic time consumers and help is needed with this endeavor (see also March 08 minutes). Several ideas were discussed on ways to curb this workload, but it was generally agreed the email format was best.

Several suggestions were discussed on how best to approach this problem by enlisting the aide of interested graduate/undergraduate students for service learning projects and **a motion was adopted and approved** that members of the Steering Committee should seek out interested students to help with this task.

Drafting grant proposals is another item in which Jane would like some assistance. Stacey and Katie have been helping with the logistics of project completion, making sure the projects are being done.

6) New Business:

Item A: Level of involvement of VWMC in WWMD activities:

The VWMC has secured funding for the purchase of water monitoring kits for this Fall's annual WWMD activities. The dates for the 2008 WWMD activities lie between **Sept 18 and Oct 18**.

Several items of clarification were addressed related to the goals and outcomes of these events. Darryl mentioned that the event is geared almost exclusively toward SOL requirements for VA schools and that several school districts have maintained active and successful programs in recent years. Darryl also suggested that we could contact, for example, a VAST (VA Assoc of Science Teachers) representative to see if there are others interested in this activity.

James has developed a lesson plan for WWMD and Katie and Stacey mentioned they would be interested in working on a WWMD activity.

Although a **motion was adopted and approved** that the VWMC have no more involvement in WWMD than the purchase of water monitoring kits for this year, many steering committee members voiced their interest in continuing the discussion of our options for this/these event(s) and to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting.

Item B: Identify rainbarrel workshop needs:

Katie mentioned that the CVW has plans for 2 workshops to be held at Phillip Morris Corp. in Richmond – tentatively scheduled for June and July. She explained that there are usually 2 lead instructors needed: one to discuss the overarching topic of water conservation and usage, and one to serve as the mechanical or guide to construction of the barrel.

Chris volunteered his time to discuss the Alliance's BayScapes program and selected topics of interest to homeowners.

Katie may present another workshop in the Farmville area later in the summer.

Item C: Will VWMC host their annual Fall Conference this year?

To begin, some important dates to consider relative to October 2008:

October 2-5 – Chesapeake Watershed Forum at the USFWS - National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV

October 18 is the 36th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act

A motion was adopted and approved that the VWMC not host a conference for the coming Fall 2008.

Jane mentioned that recent meetings addressed theme(s) of import to local government. Chris proposed that a meeting could address the use of volunteers/citizens in helping with MS-4 regulations. Darryl suggested that we could address TMDL implementation, incorporating volunteers or college/university professors in the regulatory framework or that we could address how to identify and protect high quality waters in VA.

Several ideas were discussed related to a hybridized VWMC/VCWQ meeting in Feb or March 2009 and another **motion was presented and approved** to assemble an Ad Hoc Committee to investigate a VWMC/VCWQ Spring meeting. This committee includes: Katie Register (Chair), Dan Dietrich, Jane Walker, Weedon Cloe, Chris French and Stacey Brown. The immediate task of this committee will be to select a date for the meeting and to also select an appropriate overarching topic.

7) Review of VWMC Operating Guidelines

Jane delivered copies of our current guidelines affidavit with proposed changes superimposed through the “track changes” word processing function. All items marked for deletion were agreed upon with exceptions stated below:

Exceptions included:

- we should keep the term ‘**collaboration**’ in both our Mission and Goals statements.
- we should keep the **entirety of the 4th paragraph** under the Organization section
- before removing USEPA within the 5th paragraph under Organization, we should contact Alice Mayo in Washington, DC
- the term of a Steering Committee member should be **reduced from four to three years** (6th paragraph under Organization)
- **leave in** the portion describing **inactive** status in 6th paragraph under Organization
- new Steering Committee members approved at the first regular meeting of **each calendar year** substituted into paragraph 8 under Organization
- keep the **annual election of Chair, etc** at the last regular meeting of the year in paragraph 9 under Organization

8) Announcements:

a. DEQ updates:

1- RFP for the 2009 Citizen Monitoring Grants to be released on July 1 with deadlines for application set for August 31.

2- Posting of VDGIF fish advisory signage, some of which have been adopted by citizens/groups, will be installed by June - interested persons should contact Stuart Torbeck

3- VA's 2008 305(b)/303(d) report will be released for public comment and posted to the DEQ webpage on June 9. A statewide public information teleconference will be held on June 24. The public comment period will close on July 18.

4- DEQ's participation in any World Water Monitoring Day activities this year will be coordinated by Stuart Torbeck upon request. Contact him if you would like DEQ participation these or any events. DEQ will distribute water monitoring kits to anyone who requests them while supplies last.

b. Clean VA Waterways:

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

c. VA Save Our Streams:

The summer VCWQ summit is scheduled for Saturday, August 9 at UVa.

The next regular meeting of the VWMC should take place in advance of the VCWQ Summit on August 9. Dan suggested that the next meeting date be decided via email communication with a targeted date of mid-late July.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.