Minutes by Jane Walker

Steering Committee representatives attending:
Citizens for Water Quality – Jessica Schildroth
Clean Virginia Waterways – Katie Register
United States Geological Society – Ward Staubitz
Virginia Agribusiness Council – David Frackelton
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies – Marvin Booth
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Don Smith
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) – Fran Geissler
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) – Sam Austin
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Michele Monti
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB)
American Water Works Association (AWWA-Virginia Section)
County of Henrico
James River Association (JRA)
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA)
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)
Virginia Water Well Association (VWWA)

Committee Chairs attending:
Operations – Ward Staubitz, USGS
Inventory – Michele Monti, VDH
Needs Assessment – Fran Geissler, DCR
Communications Co-chair – Stacey Brown, Virginia Save Our Streams

The Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Steering Committee met November 13, 2002 (11:00 AM-3:30 PM) at the Virginia Department of Forestry office in Charlottesville, Virginia. Katie Register, Steering Committee Chair, led the meeting. Marvin Booth with the City of Bedford was welcomed as the new representative of VAMWA. He is replacing Danny Barker, who works with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District and has served on the Steering Committee for the past three years.

The minutes from the September 4, 2002 VWMC Steering Committee meeting were adopted.
Financial Report

Jane Walker reported that the USGS has provided a $3,000 grant to the VWMC to fill in the gaps of the monitoring inventory. The VWMC received funds totaling $3,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Center for Organizational Technological Advancement for scholarships to citizens attending the VWMC Annual Meeting and Virginia Watershed Management Conference held September 25-27, 2002. The VWMC currently has a financial deficit of 319 dollars.

Jane reported submitting a grant proposal to the Virginia DEQ Citizen Monitoring Program and to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee on behalf of the VWMC. Joyce Brooks, DEQ’s Citizen Monitoring Coordinator, contacted Jane and asked if the Council would be interested and willing, as part of their project, to host a panel discussion on quality assurance-quality control at the Citizens for Water Quality winter meeting and at another meeting later in the year. The Steering Committee felt that such a project could help meet the Council’s mission, should be undertaken, and should possibly be made an annual event.

Don Smith asked if steps had been taken to write a grant proposal for workshops on stormwater management. Jane talked with Burt Tuxford of DEQ about the VWMC hosting some workshops for communities needing to meet Storm Water Phase II regulations. Bert gave the impression that most of the communities would not need to make changes to their stormwater management plans so was not certain if the communities would find workshops helpful. Fran Geissler also talked with Burt about the possibility of the VWMC sponsoring stormwater management workshops that focused on the six required control measures. She specifically mentioned the assistance the VWMC could provide about public education and outreach on stormwater impacts. Burt had a positive response for such a project.

Fran Geissler recommended that Jane submit a grant proposal to DCR. Michele Monti did not think a grant proposal to VDH could be funded at this time because of the funding cuts. Sam Austin with DOF promised to look into the possibility of providing funds to the VWMC this year.

Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Stacey Brown, Co-chair of the Communications Committee, reported that the new VWMC website is online, but the inventory is not yet working. Jane Walker explained that John Schildroth had been working diligently to get the inventory functioning, but the Water Center is experiencing computer problems that are hindering the progress.

Stacey Brown and Jane Walker will work together to update the new website. Stacey Brown asked members to submit photographs of monitoring activities that can be posted on the website.

Operations Committee

Ward Staubitz, Chair of the Operations Committee, reported that the committee reviewed a list of over 20 possible individuals or groups nominated to the VWMC Steering Committee. The committee evaluated the list by considering who could have a statewide impact or reach a group that was currently under-represented. The committee paid special attention to local
governments. The Operations Committee recommended that the Steering Committee consider the following seven groups: Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, the Virginia Ground Water Protection Steering Committee, a large volunteer monitoring group, a watershed roundtable, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

The Steering Committee voted and recommended that the Operations Committee try to find a representative from the following organizations: Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, Virginia Ground Water Protection Steering Committee, and VDOT. The Operations Committee will work on this task and invite the new representative to the next meeting. At the next meeting, the Operating Guidelines will be altered to show the increase in the number of Steering Committee members.

Inventory Committee
Michele Monti, Chair of the Inventory Committee, reported that the committee will begin filling in the gaps of the inventory once it is online and will begin working to have the data linked to a map.

Needs Assessment Committee
Fran Geissler, Chair of the Needs Assessment Committee, reported on the survey findings of the needs of local government monitors. Pie charts were used to show the percentage of interests in the areas of Communications & Partnership Building, Technical Assistance, and Training & Education. Jane asked that a similar summary be developed for each of the different monitoring groups and be posted on the VWMC website. Once this task is complete, the Steering Committee decided to place the Needs Assessment Committee in stasis until needed.

Officer Nominations
The floor was opened for nominations for VWMC Steering Committee officers for 2003. Patti Jackson, Don Smith, Len Smock, and Lyle Varnell were nominated to serve as Chair. Don declined the nomination. Jane offered to contact anyone not present to determine his or her acceptance of the nomination. Patti Jackson, Katie Register, and Robin Wilder were nominated for Vice-chair. Jessica Schildroth was nominated for Secretary, and she accepted the nomination.

Strategic Planning
Based on the June 19th Strategic Planning session, the Steering Committee decided to develop a task force for 1) Finances and 2) Coordination and Education. Each task force will plan activities within the specific identified area. Committees will be formed to carry out the plans. Steering Committee members and VWMC members are eligible to serve on each task force. Potentially interested members were identified for each task force. Suggestions for members on the Task Force on Finances included Sam Austin, David Frackelton, Patti Jackson, Chuck Kanetsky, Katie Register, Len Smock, Ward Staubitz, Jane Walker, and Tamim Younos. Len and/or Patti will be asked to initiate this task force. Members for the Task Force for Coordination and Education could consist of Marvin Booth, Nikki Bennett, Fran Geissler, Michele Monti, Jessica Schildroth, Lyle Varnell, Jane Walker, and Robin Wilder. Fran offered
to initiate the formation of the task force but requested that she not become the leader of the task force.

VWMC Annual Meeting/ Virginia Watershed Management Conference
Fran reported that the VWMC sponsored session was well received by the conference attendees. The three speakers, Carl Zipper, Stacey Moulds, and Alison Teetor, were excellent.

It was suggested that the VWMC 4th Annual Meeting should not be held at the conclusion of the Watershed Management Conference. Instead, having the meeting before the start of the conference or early morning/evening during the conference might be better. Next year, the VWMC could aim to shorten its business meeting to about 30 minutes. The annual report could be distributed to replace the committee reports given by the Committee Chairs. Specific tasks requiring assistance from the membership could be announced and explained, and sign-up boards could be used.

30th Anniversary of Clean Water Act, National Water Monitoring Day, and VWMC involvement
Don Smith and Ward Staubitz reported on the activities of the National Water Monitoring Day. Virginia had the most registered monitoring sites as indicated on the Year of Clean Water website (www.yearofcleanwater.org). The October 18th event at the Tredegar Ironworks in downtown Richmond, Virginia was a success. Local 4th and 5th grade classes attended. There were several excellent speakers including Secretary of Natural Resources, Tayloe Murphy. Organizing the event went smoothly. This was attributed in part to the event’s sponsors being members of the VWMC who had gotten to know each other through VWMC meetings.

Next Steering Committee Meeting:
The next general Steering Committee meeting is set for January 9, 2003 at 11:00 am at the USGS office in Richmond, Virginia. Other meeting dates will be determined for March – July, 2003. Don Smith suggested that the Piedmont DEQ office in Glen Allen could be used as an alternative meeting location for future meetings.