Minutes by Jessica Schildroth

Steering Committee representatives attending:
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) – Stacey Moulds
Citizens for Water Quality – Jessica Schildroth
County of Henrico – Robin Wilder
James River Association (JRA) – Patti Jackson
United States Geological Society (USGS) – Karen Rice
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) – Dana Roberts
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies/City of Bedford – Marvin Booth
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) – Len Smock
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) – John Kauffman
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Don Smith
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) – Sam Austin
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Michele Monti
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell
Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) – Steve Klevickis
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:
American Water Works Association (AWWA – Virginia Section)
Clean Virginia Waterways
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III
Virginia Agribusiness Council
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Virginia Water Well Association (VWWA)

Committee Chairs attending:
Operations – Sam Austin
Inventory – Stacey Moulds
Communications Co-Chair – Nikki Bennett, Marine Corps Base, Quantico

The Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Steering Committee met March 12, 2003 (11:00 AM – 2:15 PM) at the Department of Forestry office in Charlottesville, Virginia. Lyle Varnell, Steering Committee Chair, led the meeting.

The minutes from the January 9, 2003 VWMC Steering Committee meeting were approved with minor changes. It was noted that Gary Du represented DEQ at the January 9th meeting. The last sentence of the first paragraph of the Operations Committee summary was changed to read “The proposed new text to the Operating Guidelines, as voted on and passed by the Steering Committee, is shown below.”
Financial Report
The VWMC currently has a financial deficit of 2,451 dollars, and some of the expenses for the QA/QC forum have not been applied to the DEQ mini-grant.

The proposal to DOF is still pending, as are the proposals to DCR. There are several proposals in draft form which will go to DCR shortly.

Committee Reports
Operations Committee
The Operations Committee held a meeting by conference call March 6, 2003. Sam Austin was elected as Chairman for 2003. Don Smith reported that Ward Staubitz had invited the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and the Association of Private Colleges to nominate representatives for the Steering Committee, but had received no responses. Don Smith reported that it was decided that individuals within the Operations Committee would follow up with their contacts within the four organizations. Ward Staubitz had not received the 2003 work plans, requested at the last Steering Committee, from the 2002 chairs as yet, but would email the former chairs for a discussion of work plans for the next meeting. The work plan for the Operations Committee was drafted.

Communications Committee
The Communications Committee was unable to meet since the last Steering Committee meeting. At their next meeting, a new chair will be elected. Continuing work on the website is their main focus right now.

Inventory Committee
The Inventory Committee has not met yet this year. Stacey Moulds was nominated as the new chair. The mapping/GIS presentation of the inventory data will be pursued this year, including speaking to possible GIS technicians. Stacey Moulds suggested using Towson University’s GIS tools. There was some discussion that it might be more appropriate to use Virginia-based GIS specialists for this work. Len Smock said that he would speak to Greg Garman at the VCU Center for Environmental Studies. In order to start filling the gaps in the Inventory, Stacey Moulds will send out the website URL with a brief message to the Citizens for Water Quality listserv. In addition, Don Smith will get a contact list of non-DEQ groups whose data can be used for Assessments to the Inventory Committee. Don suggested speaking to Carl Zipper at Virginia Tech about GIS work.

Task Force for Coordination and Education
The Task Force for Coordination and Education met twice prior to the Steering Committee to continue the planning process. Marvin Booth was elected as the 2003 Chair. There was more discussion about target audiences, and the logistics of trying to hold conferences/workshops by ourselves or piggybacking onto an existing event. At this time the workshops which seem to have received the most interest are TMDLs and Stormwater Phase II. Don Smith offered to get the Regional TMDL contact list to Marvin. There was a call for ideas for educational programs to offer, due April 11th to
Marvin. The Steering Committee discussed the best ways to get to the target audience, and Patti Jackson recommended contacting the Planning District Commission (PDC). Combining PDC and SWCD training as a way of reaching both rural and urban areas was discussed. It was decided that case studies would probably be very attractive for TMDLs and Stormwater Phase II, and Don Smith recommended contacting Charlie Martin about TMDLs in urban areas. It was mentioned the Burt Tuxford would be the person to contact about Stormwater Phase II contacts.

Citizens for Water Quality Winter Meeting; QA/QC Forum
Jane Walker reported that VWMC coordinated a four-person panel presentation on the importance of QA/QC at the Citizens for Water Quality winter meeting February 1, 2003. Fran Geissler was the moderator, and Jessica Schildroth introduced the VWMC. Handouts including information about QA/QC, and information about the VWMC website were passed out at the meeting. There was also a survey for feedback on the meeting, and those results had been studied. All the responses were excellent, and everyone who filled out the survey had very positive responses and comments. There were additionally a few suggested workshop topics: (1) monitoring plan design, (2) elements of QA/QC planning, (3) evaluation of data and trend analysis, (4) funding opportunities and (5) watershed management plans at a local level.

Task Force on Finances
The Task Force on Finances met during lunch and outlined their plan of action. Funding ideas shall be obtained from members. The necessity of a tangible deliverable was discussed. The Inventory can be used as a product for many of the proposals.

There was some discussion about the fact that operating funds are almost impossible to get from foundations, and that maybe the Environmental Business Council would be a good place to look for those. Lyle Varnell has said he will contact them. It was decided that for now, the Council would likely rely on state and federal agencies for operating funds.

It was decided that a PowerPoint presentation outlining who the Council is, what the Council does, who is represented on the Council, etc. be developed and posted on the website, as well as be used to take as a presentation at events.

It was decided that the VWMC must make efforts to ensure that donors get good advertising in return for their support including sending out emails to the membership announcing funding when it comes in and putting a banner on the website thanking (and listing) the donors. It was also decided a counter should be put on the website to see how many people are visiting.

Jane Walker reported that she was able to set up an account through the Virginia Tech foundation where tax-exempt VWMC contributions can be made. She will check on how to make out checks, and that information will be posted on the website.
Other funding ideas should be sent to Len Smock.

**Future Meetings**

It was decided by the Steering Committee to have programs built in as part of the agenda. Jane and Lyle requested that each member send an email (by April 11th) to them with a program idea and when the person might be willing to present it.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates:**
- May 8th, 2003 at the Piedmont DEQ Office in Glen Allen (11 am – 3 pm)
- July 9th, 2003 at DOF in Charlottesville. (11 am – 3pm)

**Other Announcements:**
Patti Jackson reported that Lynn Ridley would be leaving his job as the James River Association Riverkeeper, to continue previous work with Defense. She reports that JRA is making progress towards replacing him.

Patti Jackson also reported that she received a call from University of Richmond’s “Connect Richmond” asking if we have anything we would like to add to their environmental program at this time and suggested that we should link them to our data and our website. She asked those with ideas to please contact her.