Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Meeting
July 9, 2003
DOF Building, Charlottesville, VA

Minutes by Jane Walker

Steering Committee representatives attending:
Citizens for Water Quality (CWQ) – Stacey Brown
Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) – Katie Register
James River Association (JRA) – Chuck Frederickson
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III – Eva Ammentorp
United States Geological Society (USGS) – Karen Rice
Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) – David van Gelder
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA) – Marvin Booth
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) – Len Smock
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) – Fran Geissler
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 Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC) – Jenn Sgro
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker
Virginia Water Well Association (VWWA) – Jane Cain

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB)
American Water Works Association (AWWA – Virginia Section)
County of Henrico
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)
Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAC)
Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA)

Committee Chairs attending:
Communications Co-Chair – Stacey Brown, Virginia Save Our Streams
Operations – Sam Austin, DOF
Coordination and Education Task Force – Marvin Booth, City of Bedford (VAMWA)
Finance Task Force – Katie Register, CVW

The Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Steering Committee met July 9, 2003
(11:00 AM – 3:00 PM) at the Department of Forestry building in Charlottesville,
Virginia. Lyle Varnell, Steering Committee Chair, led the meeting.

Each attendee introduced himself or herself, and special welcomes were extended to three
new representatives. Eva Ammentorp is filling the position held by Chuck Kanetsky as
EPA Region III’s Water Monitoring Coordinator and representative to the VWMC.
Representatives from two new organizations joining the VWMC Steering Committee were also welcome: Jenn Sgro with VFIC and David van Gelder with VACo.

The minutes from the May 8, 2003 VWMC Steering Committee meeting were approved after a minor correction was made.

**Financial Report**

As of the end of the 2003 fiscal year, the VWMC has a financial deficit of 8,112 dollars. Jane Walker reported that the Virginia Department of Forestry intends to award about $2,000 to the VWMC, although the paperwork has not yet been completed.

**Old Business**

*Big Sandy letter*

Lyle Varnell reported that he sent a letter to the Big Sandy River Basin Coalition and copied the letter to the Secretary of Natural Resources. In the letter, Lyle explained the mission of the VWMC and described its support of the Big Sandy River Basin Coalition’s efforts to increase funding in the state for natural resources. The letter also volunteered the VWMC’s assistance with the Big Sandy River Basin Coalition’s efforts. Lyle has not yet received a response to his letter.

*Speakers for VACDE Training*

The VWMC will be sponsoring two sessions at the Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees training at Grave’s Mountain Lodge in August. Marvin Booth reported that Barry Fox, with Virginia Cooperative Extension, is able to lead the Monitoring Session on August 27th. The Coordination and Education Task Force is still looking for leaders to discuss TMDL and Storm Water Phase II implementation practices for the second VWMC sponsored session. Fran Geissler recommended several people at DCR who could potentially lead the session.

*VWMC Sponsored Session at Citizens for Water Quality Summit*

Jane Walker reported that the VWMC is sponsoring two sessions on designing a monitoring plan at the July 26th CWQ Summit. The VWMC has three panelists, David Buckalew, Stacey Moulds, and Roger Stewart, to give presentations on the goals of monitoring. The panelists and audience will work with Joyce Brooks, DEQ’s Citizen Monitoring Coordinator, to address a “real world” example of a monitoring plan design. The group will develop the monitoring plan by completing worksheets provided in a revised DEQ monitoring manual developed for citizen monitors.

**New Business**

*Virginia Water Monitoring Day*

This year, water monitors will be able to celebrate the 2nd National Water Monitoring Day, the 1st International Water Monitoring Day, and the 1st Virginia Water Monitoring Day. The VWMC will take the lead in coordinating activities in Virginia. The VWMC will sponsor a central event, similar to last year’s, on Friday, October 17th in Richmond. We intend to have high profile speaker and monitoring activities for school children.
Fran reported that DCR is planning to sponsor monitoring activities at state parks throughout the Commonwealth in celebration of the National Monitoring Day. Jane Walker reported that at least six citizen groups have already contacted her expressing interest in hosting local events. Fran recommended the VWMC contact each of the Roundtables and ask for their participation. Jane agreed to send each an invitation.

Stacey Brown suggested that we try to have a groundwater component to our Virginia Water Monitoring Day activities. Jane Cain offered to talk with David Mills at the USGS and Terri Brown about a groundwater component.

It was also suggested that Secretary Murphy be invited to the Monitoring Day central activity and present him with a declaration of support from citizen organizations. Sponsoring poster contests and wade-ins were suggested events for future years.

**VWMC Annual Meeting**

Because the Virginia Watershed Conference will not be held this year, the Steering Committee discussed whether or not to have an annual meeting. The group was in agreement to have a meeting, and so discussed potential places to meet. Jane Walker explained that in May, Stephanie Martin offered that the Soil and Water Conservation District Conference might serve as a possible place for the VWMC to have its annual meeting. The Operations Committee suggested having a less formal meeting and holding it in conjunction with the Virginia Water Monitoring Day activities. The Steering Committee preferred the suggestion to have a meeting at the Richmond Monitoring Day event on October 17, 2003.

Len Smock offered that if the group wanted a place indoors and/or food in conjunction with the meeting, he could probably arrange something at VCU. It was also suggested that the VWMC could have its meeting in the middle of Monitoring Day activities. The VWMC could describe its mission and accomplishments for the year. It was suggested that the inventory could be officially unveiled as the primary part of the meeting. Stacey Brown and Fran Geissler offered to work with the Inventory Chair, Stacey Moulds, in leading the unveiling and helping to provide a press release about the inventory. It was also decided to explore the possibility of giving monitoring awards (e.g., Citizen Monitor Award, Agency Monitor Award, etc.) at future annual meetings.

The group took a break to view a ForestRIM demonstration and to have lunch.

**Update Operating Guidelines**

The Steering Committee briefly discussed and was in support of the changes to the Operating Guidelines proposed by the Operations Committee. Katie Register suggested that the new Steering Committee members be added to Appendix One. Len Smock moved that the proposed changes be accepted, and Chuck Frederickson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Fran Geissler asked that the Operations Committee consider either expanding the list of permanent members or making all organizations nonpermanent members. Fran recommended that the Virginia Department of Health, Citizens for Water Quality, and the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies could be made permanent.
members of the VWMC Steering Committee. The Operations Committee agreed to discuss her proposal at their next meeting.

State Mitigation Planning Committee
The VWMC received an invitation to serve on the State Mitigation Planning Committee. The Steering Committee discussed the VWMC’s possible participation on this committee, and Chuck Frederickson volunteered to serve as the VWMC’s representative on the committee. Katie Register offered to send the information she has about the committee and its first meeting to be held on July 28, 2003 to Chuck.

Announcements and Committee Reports
Announcements
Lyle Varnell reported that a draft of the report developed from the state and regional surveys in which Ward, Jane, and Lyle participated is anticipated for distribution in the near future. The survey participants will be asked to comment on the draft at a July 28th meeting. Jane offered to distribute the report to the Steering Committee for their input prior to the July 28th meeting.

Barbara Patterson with the U.S. General Accounting Office is looking into state issues concerning a lack of coordination of data. The GAO team was invited to the July VWMC Steering Committee meeting but was unable to attend on such a short notice. It was suggested that Lyle Varnell, Jane Walker, Tamim Younos, Michele Monti, Katie Register, and DEQ representatives meet with the GAO team to discuss this issue in more detail.

Operations Committee
Sam Austin distributed the 2003 Work Plans and mentioned that they may change a little since not all committees have met and approved their work plan for the year. Jane Walker commented that since the VWMC year runs from one annual meeting to the next, we are approaching the end of the VWMC year and still developing work plans. It was suggested that all committees should meet before the VWMC Steering Committee meeting (10:00 am) that is held immediately prior to the annual meeting. The purpose of the once a year, face-to-face committee meeting is to develop the committee’s work plan for the upcoming year. The group supported the described approach, and therefore, decided that all committee’s will meet at 10:00 a.m. on September 10, 2003 at the USGS office in Richmond. Ward will be contacted to be sure enough space can be found for all five committees.

Communications Committee
Stacey Brown received Katie’s file on the development of the new VWMC brochure. Stacey will work to complete the brochure and send it out to the Steering Committee for approval.
Inventory Committee
Jane Walker commented that Stacey Moulds had expressed concerns about having sufficient time to lead the Inventory Committee. If Stacey feels she is unable to serve as Chair, Joyce Brooks was suggested as a possible new committee chair. Others commented the Joyce’s time is already heavily obligated and would therefore most likely be unable to serve as Chair.

Fran Geissler suggested that the Inventory Committee make special efforts to include the county or watershed information. The absence of this information limits the use of the inventory. Several also suggested linking with the ForestRIM program to provide more information.

Finance Task Force
The Finance Task Force met just prior to the Steering Committee meeting to discuss funding possibilities and strategies. The attention given to the VWMC by EPA and the GAO because of the inventory seems to be a product of interest and use. The Finance Task Force should use this product as a way to leverage support for the Council.

Coordination and Education Task Force
The Coordination and Education Task Force met just prior to the Steering Committee meeting. Most of the topics of discussion were covered earlier in the meeting. In addition, the group chose an official name: Coordination and Education Task Force. It also brought up the desire for photos (ones taken at Virginia Water Monitoring Day) for an exhibit and a tabletop exhibit board. Jane Walker offered to put together an exhibit for the Citizens for Water Quality Summit.

Future Meetings
Meeting Dates:
September 10th, 2003 at USGS in Richmond. (11 am – 3 pm)
November 12th at DOF in Charlottesville (11 am – 3 pm)