Minutes by Dana Roberts

Steering Committee representatives attending:
Citizens for Water Quality (CWQ) – Stacey Brown
County of Henrico – Robin Wilder
James River Association (JRA) – Chuck Fredrickson
Longwood University – David Buckalew
United States Geological Survey (USGS) – Ward Staubitz
Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAC) – David Frackelton
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA) – Marvin Booth
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) – Dana Roberts
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) – Len Smock
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) – Jody Aston
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Darryl Glover
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) – Sam Austin
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Michele Monti
Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges (VFIC) – Jenn Sgro
Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (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:
American Water Works Association (AWWA-Virginia Section)
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB)
Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW)
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III
Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)

Committee Chairs attending:
Communications – Stacey Brown, Virginia Save Our Streams
Operations – Sam Austin, DOF
Education Task Force – Marvin Booth, City of Bedford (VAMWA)

The Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Steering Committee met May 12, 2004 (11:00 AM – 3:00 PM) at the USGS Building in Richmond, Virginia. Michele Monti, Steering Committee Chair, led the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 11:02 AM. Each attendee introduced himself or herself. A special welcome was extended to our newest Steering Committee member, David Buckalew of Longwood University. The meeting agenda was approved with one addition of old business: Virginia Municipal League (VML) Steering Committee member. The minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and approved.
Financial Report:
Jane Walker reported that the VWMC has a financial balance of $ -4,402 as of May 11, 2004. Sam Austin, Michele Monti, and Ward Staubitz mentioned that their respective agencies might have funds available for the VWMC.

Old Business:
A. Review June 2002 Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment Results

B. QAPP Training Session (Education Taskforce) – The Steering Committee agreed to change the committee name to Education Taskforce. Michele Monti mentioned that the cost for a speaker would be $ 2,500 plus expenses. The audience (citizens, local governments, college researchers, and others), day of the week (weekday or weekend day), and meeting location need to be determined. Ideas included holding this training in conjunction with the annual meeting for approximately 20-25 people with a suggested registration fee of $ 25.00 per person. Jenn Sgro offered that VFIC could cover the cost of a workshop if several spaces could be reserved for independent college participants and the workshop covered a topic of interest. The Education Taskforce will develop a survey to gauge interest in having a QAPP training or training sessions in other areas. The survey could be distributed at the CWQ Summit, and Jane W. and other Steering Committee members could send it to their email contacts (targeting colleges, universities, VML, VACo, SWCD employees, citizen monitors and others).

2004 VWMC Conference (Operations Committee) – The Operations Committee recommended a full day event on October 18th, National Monitoring Day, and proposed co-sponsoring the conference with the VML and VACo to attract and focus the program towards local government monitoring/data needs. John Carlock was suggested as a possible keynote speaker. A full day session was proposed, and JMU was suggested as a possible meeting location. The morning sessions could focus on 1) regulations, TMDLs, tributary strategies; 2) economic development; and 3) case studies. The afternoon session could focus on monitoring techniques. Possible techniques to highlight include assessing the occurrence and location of leaking sewer lines and failing septic systems in urban/suburban watersheds – i.e., tracking down the source of human bacteria in streams. Please send information to Robin Wilder on what types of techniques are being used statewide.

C. Citizens for Water Quality Summit (VWMC Involvement) – The Summit will be July 24th. This year the summit will be low key due to funding issues. The CWQ is looking for two VWMC volunteers to judge the applications for organization awards.

D. Virginia Municipal League Steering Committee Member – The Steering Committee elected VML’s representative nominee, Dr. Rupert Cutler from the City of Roanoke. Michele Monti offered to contact Dr. Cutler and invite him to
the next VWMC meeting. Robin Wilder commented that VDOT seems to be close to selecting a nominee for the Steering Committee.

New Business:

A. Groundwater Data Coordination Work Group – Jane Cain and Ward Staubitz reported a need to survey the groundwater projects being conducted around the state. The survey will identify groundwater monitors and discuss the scope of their projects, and it would be used to develop a database.

B. Department of Environmental Quality Updates – Darryl Glover reported. As a result of the comments received during the 305(b) report public comment period, DEQ will restructure the executive summary to include the conclusions. Additionally, EPA is requiring DEQ to list in the 305(b) report the state’s category 4 waters, those not needing TMDLs but still impaired (includes waters where TMDLs have been completed, specific acid deposition waters, etc.). The former Citizen Monitoring Coordinator position will hopefully be filled in July, and will have a new title: Water Quality Liaison. The main function of this position is to seek private and public sources of water quality monitoring data that DEQ is not currently using. Darryl will send out a job announcement to the council members. He also mentioned that there is a possibility of offering citizen monitoring grants during 2004-2005, and commented that the VWMC would be eligible for funding through the program.

C. Having Programs at Steering Committee Meetings? A discussion was held to determine if presentations should be made as a regular part of the Steering Committee meetings. It was decided to have presentations on a case-by-case basis and possibly showcase these presentations on the website.

D. Ward mentioned Friday October 15th as a date for a Virginia Monitoring Event. Ideas included getting roundtables and watershed managers involved this year. Lyle volunteered to help. Ward has monitoring kits available from last year.

Committee Reports:

A. Operations – Robin Wilder asked all chairs to send her work plans as soon as possible.

B. Communications – No report of new activities.

C. Inventory – Lyle Varnell reported that the committee is working to improve the inventory by:

   a. Making it more user friendly
   b. Revising the online survey – posted by June 1st
c. Generating a scope of work for a GIS Grant – The new survey will include HUC codes. Task 1 – Map the existing data using Arcview or other comparable program. Task 2 – Map new survey entries. Darryl mentioned that DEQ might be able to squeeze this work into their agenda after the first of the year (January 2005). Ward mentioned that USGS has a GIS person that may have extra time to work on this during the fall.

D. Finance – Jane read part of a letter from the Virginia Tech Corporate Relations Department stating that it will be unable to provide fundraising assistance to the Council. Jane offered to apply for an EPA Assessment and Watershed Protection Program Grant, which is due June 21st. Len Smock suggested Jane speak with EPA’s RFIP’s assistant before writing and submitting a proposal. Stacey Brown and Jody Aston offered to assist by reviewing a draft of the proposal.

E. Education – No report of new activities.

Next meeting Date:

July 14, 2004 at DOF in Charlottesville (11 am – 3pm)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 PM.