Virginia Water Monitoring Council Steering Committee Meeting
August 10, 2005
USGS, Richmond, VA

Minutes by Robin Wilder

Steering Committee representatives attending:
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) – Stacey Moulds, Jen Sidleck
Citizens for Water Quality (CWQ) – Jessica Schildroth
County of Henrico – Robin Wilder
Longwood University – David Buckalew
United States Geological Society (USGS) – Mark Bennett
Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA) – Marvin Booth
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Darryl Glover, James Beckley
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) – Sam Austin
Virginia Department of Health (VDH) – Michele Monti, Dan Dietrich
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) – Steve Begg
Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) – Lyle Varnell
Virginia Water Resources Research Center (VWRRC) – Jane Walker

Organizations without a representative at the meeting:
American Water Works Association (AWWA – Virginia chapter)
Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW)
James River Association (JRA)
United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III
Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAC)
Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges (VFIC)
Virginia Municipal League (VML)
Virginia Save our Streams (VASOS)
Virginia Water Well Association (VWWA)

Committee Chairs attending:
Operations – Sam Austin
Inventory – James Beckley

The Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Steering Committee met August 10, 2005 (11:00 AM – 3:00 PM) at the United States Geological Survey Office in Richmond, Virginia. Marvin Booth, Steering Committee Chair, led the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM. Following welcome and introductions, the meeting agenda was reviewed and approved with the addition of establishing new meeting dates under New Business. The minutes from the June 8, 2005 meeting were reviewed and approved.
Financial Report:
Jane Walker reported that the VWMC has a financial balance of $12,145 as of August 10, 2005.

Old Business:

VWMC 2005 Workplan:
It was moved and seconded to adopt the final revised document.

VWMC Fact Sheet: Proposed Laboratory Accreditation Regulations
The fact sheets developed by the VWMC about the proposed laboratory accreditation regulations are posted on our website, and Jane Walker and James Beckley received citizen inquiries following distribution of the fact sheets. Most questions concern the proposed fees. The fee structure is set so that the program is self-funded. With these funds, DCLS will be hiring 19 laboratory inspectors and managing the program. All laboratories that submit data to state agencies will be affected. Approximately 1/3 of citizen monitors’ data sent to DEQ uses a laboratory so will be affected by the new regulations. The timeline for implementation has not been set by DCLS yet.

The group discussed Rupert Cutler’s email comments about this subject and his request for the VWMC’s guidance in supporting or opposing the proposed regulations. Jane offered to contact Rupert and let him know that the VWMC has established that it will provide information about water-related issues but does not advocate for or against proposed policies.

Independent college representation in the VWMC:
This is still on Jane’s “to-do” list.

Vision of VWMC as a professional organization:
Lyle discussed the possibility of the VWMC becoming a professional organization with Tamim Younos, interim director of the VWRRC. Tamim was positive about this possibility as there are no known professional societies for water monitoring. The VWMC would need to become a 501(c)3 organization – which is not difficult; however, as a 501(c)3 organization, the administrative aspects of the VWMC could not be housed at Virginia Tech. Lyle will set up a meeting with the membership committee, of which Jessica Schildroth, Marvin Booth, and Tamim Younos are interested in joining.

Citizens for Water Quality Summit – July 23
Approximately 84 people attended the 2005 Summit. James Beckley reported it was the most well attended summit. VWMC sponsored two sessions: 1) Statistics led by Jeff and Joanna Cornell (Fairfax SWCD). Approximately 30 people attended this session. 2) How to Determine the Quality of Your Stream led by James Beckley (DEQ) and Moira Croghan (DCR). This session explained the role of regulatory and other agencies. The VWMC developed a document entitled: “Water Related Regulations: Which Government Agency is Responsible?” It was suggested that the VWMC more widely distribute this document.

At the Summit, the Virginia Foundation of Natural Resources, which was formed by the 2005 Virginia General Assembly, was highlighted. This foundation will be responsible for three non-regulatory areas: 1) education; 2) citizen monitoring; and 3) pollution prevention. Thirteen members, one from each roundtable, will serve on the foundation’s board. Funds need to be raised by 2007 to support the work of the foundation, or it will fold.
Maryland Water Monitoring Council Meeting:
Marvin is still trying to reach them to set up a meeting. Michele Monti mentioned meeting in DC so no one would need to request out-of-state travel.

New Business:

VWMC Annual Meeting/Conference, October 17, 2005.
The Operations Committee held a conference call in June. Sessions discussed to have at the annual meeting included:


2) TMDL’s for Local Governments: Implementation, Monitoring, Urban vs. Agricultural, ability of citizen monitors to help with monitoring requirements. Specific names mentioned that may help with this session included Charles Martin and Jutta Schneider.

3) Low Impact Development within zoning constraints, Ask the Expert. A possible speaker would be Richard Street.

Possible Keynote speakers included Bill McDonough and Paul Hawkins.

The group decided not to have a Rain Barrel Workshop as part of the conference because rain barrels cannot be used by homeowners until the spring season.

A wrap-up session was suggested that would include discussion of the possible evolution of the VWMC into a professional society. The purpose of the discussion is to obtain feedback from the membership.

Two weeks before the annual conference a notice needs to be sent out with nominees for the Steering Committee (usually four people rotate off of the board).

EPA Region III Volunteer Monitoring Conference, Nov. 4-5, 2005, Canaan Valley Institute, WV –
James Beckley provided a brochure to everyone. Jane reported that Jeff and Joanna Cornell were willing to present their statistics workshop at this conference if EPA desires. James suggested that the VWMC participate as an exhibitor at the conference.

ACB and Virginia SOS’s VEE grant
Information was distributed to the VWMC Steering Committee detailing the possible development of a statewide volunteer monitoring organization in Virginia. Stacey Moulds described the effort. A statewide meeting will be held October 29 to discuss the needs that this statewide coalition will address. Discussion ensued about what would be the best umbrella organization for the coalition. Several individuals expressed that the VWMC may not be the best umbrella organization and suggested that either CWQ or Va. SOS would be better umbrella organizations. The VWMC, however, is very supportive of establishing such an organization.

DEQ Updates
- The 2006 Assessment Guidance will be released soon. EPA’s final guidance is out. A public information meeting on the guidance will be held Wednesday, September 7 at 1:30 p.m. at the DEQ office at 629 E. Main Street, Richmond. Contact Harry Augustine for more information. The guidance document includes Chesapeake Bay criteria, Beach Assessment criteria, and the methodology change for benthic monitoring.
- Although EPA is very supportive of using all available data, DEQ did not get the EPA grant to set up internet options for citizen monitors to submit their data.
• The RFP for the Citizen Monitoring Grant Program is currently posted on the website, and the deadline is September 1. The maximum award is $4,000 for competitive grants. Noncompetitive grants include: $10,000 to ACB and SOS each; $20,000 to Friends of Smith Mountain Lake; and $6,000 to the VWMC.
• DEQ gave monies for coli-scan monitoring and will begin training next week.
• The 2006 Assessment Report will include 370 of 900 citizen monitoring samples submitted to the agency.

Other Announcements:
Don Smith at DEQ has donated an EPA document entitled *Stream Corridor Restoration Manual* to the VWMC.

Committee Reports:
A. **Operations** – See Annual Conference information discussed earlier.

B. **Inventory** – The committee is gathering data to include on the GIS map to be posted online. They will meet near the end of August.

C. **Marketing Project** – They met at 10:15 a.m. before the Steering Committee meeting. Darryl Glover and Steve Begg met with Dr. Patricia Thompson (VCU Business School) in July, and she has agreed to develop a marketing plan for the VWMC as a class project. In October, the VWMC must present a creative brief to the class that includes the organization’s compelling message. Dr. Thompson has provided guidelines for us to use to develop this brief. Darryl Glover distributed this guideline to everyone present.

D. **Finance** – No report.

E. **Education** – The committee has met several times and is currently planning Water Monitoring Day activities. Dana has submitted a grant request to the Virginia Environmental Endowment for educational materials to distribute to teachers, etc. as a part of Water Monitoring Day.

F. **Groundwater** – They have not met since the last Steering Committee meeting. They need to complete the project from the Altria grant money by the end of the calendar year.

**Future Meeting Date:**
September 12, Monday, 10 a.m., Virginia DOF in Charlottesville

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:40 p.m.