

GROUND WATER PROTECTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary for July 16, 2002

PLEASE NOTE:

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on Monday, September 9, 2002, from 9 AM – 11 AM, Department of Environmental Quality, Seventh Floor Conference Room, 629 East Main Street, in Richmond. This is a change from the previously scheduled date of September 17.

Contact Mary Ann Massie at 804-698-4042 for details

ATTENDANCE:

Steering Committee members in attendance:

- *Jody Aston*, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Soil and Water Conservation
- *Howard Freeland*, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Waste Division
- *Larry Lawson*, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Water Division Director
- *Nancy Miller*, Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department (CBLAD)
- *Keisha Parker*, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)
- *Terry Wagner, Mary Ann Massie*, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Water Division
- *Frank Dukes*, facilitator, *Irene Boland*, recorder, Institute for Environmental Negotiation, University of Virginia

Also in attendance:

- *Rick Woolard*, Dominion Virginia Power
- *Frances Zaun*, Virginia Farm Bureau
- *Brent Waters*, Golder Corporation
- *Josh Rubinstein*, VA Rural Water Association
- *Lisa Meddin*, James City Service Authority

Agencies not in attendance:

- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)
- Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME)
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)

AGENCY UPDATES

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Water Division

Drought conditions have intensified despite weekend rainfalls. The recent rain will aid agriculture but fall short of alleviating Virginia's long-term hydrologic drought. Terry Wagner reported that Governor Warner will host a summit of media meteorologists to discuss current drought impacts and suggest actions that individuals can take. Twenty-six Virginia public water systems are currently on voluntary conservation while ten are on mandatory conservation. It is likely that the Richmond regional area will institute mandatory conservation within the next thirty days. Prior to recent days, the corn crop situation looked very bleak. Although some improvement will occur due to the recent rain, there may be a total loss in some places, especially the Valley.

In late spring a small reprieve slowed the rate of decline of ground water levels. Shallow aquifers can take weeks or months to reflect precipitation events. Currently, surface water levels appear at levels typical of September and October.

In the agricultural community, many farmers have reduced cattle herds as a result of the drought. Farmers have been forced to sell their cattle on a depressed market due to lack of water and feed. There is only two-thirds to one-half of the normal quantity of hay, which will affect the winter feed stores, and the second hay crop is non-existent. In large areas in the central part of the state it is likely that the hay fields will die and require re-seeding next season.

The Drought Management Task Force reports are available on the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Department of Environmental Quality websites. A new report will also be produced in the coming week. Predictions for long-range precipitation do not stray from other years, and even average rainfall will not alleviate the drought conditions. This is a four-year drought with impacts that have been compared to a 9-10 year drought in the 1960's. Florida and North Carolina have instituted mandatory enforced drought conservation. The Governor is considering basin-wide surface water management measures ranging from voluntary and mandatory conservation to rationing.

DEQ staff presented the draft surface water management regulations to the Water Control Board and received authorization to move forward to public hearings. This will occur after the Department of Planning and Budget reviews the regulation, which will likely take at least 45 days.

Larry Lawson reports that Roanoke and Salem are now working together on water use issues because the reservoir is down 29 feet. The water supply issue is near critical in that area.

Waste water reuse regulations have been put on hold due to confusion on the part of some parties who think that the regulations will allow direct reuse. The regulations will set forth procedures to reuse waste water largely for irrigation, including uses such as golf courses and highway medians.

Plans for the Children's Ground Water Festivals are being finalized. The Festival in Dickenson County will be held Thursday, September 19 at Breaks Interstate Park. On Friday September 27 another festival will be held at Northumberland County.

The FY 2003 draft workplan for the Section 106 Ground Water Protection grant has been forwarded to DEQ management. The workplan will be sent to EPA later this summer and approval is expected by late September.

Dan Schweitzer of VDACS and Mary Ann Massie of DEQ will attend a Senior Pesticides Officials course on water quality at the University of California-Davis in mid-August.

DEQ's Combined Impact Technical Advisory Committee water group is looking at impacts from power plants and other major new water users to be considered in permitting such construction. The focus is on the lack of statewide water planning initiatives. Ground water quantity issues will be receiving a significant amount of attention in the future.

A statewide report just released assessing surface water quality of the rivers in Virginia show that 44% of all rivers do not meet water quality standards. The report also details possible factors of why this is so. Visit the DEQ website at www.deq.state.va.us/water/303d.html to view maps and type in your own address and view your proximity to rivers being monitored.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Waste Division

Howard Freeland reported that some DEQ monitoring wells are going dry due to the drought. Contamination in the Campbell County water supply occurred next to a residential trailer park showing constituents from a nearby landfill. The community water supply wells have been decommissioned and the County is working with the state to secure a safe supply.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Jody Aston reported that the Karst group met to create the Urban Storm Water Committee.

Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department (CBLAD)

Nancy Miller reports that the Secretary of Natural Resources is meeting with agency heads regarding the future of the agency. The grants program was cut severely, with funding available for only one of twenty-four approved projects. Both DCR and DEQ have offered some funding and, pending NOAA approval, an additional \$231,055 will allow CBLAD to fund 11 projects overall. The programs will start late and run from October 2002 to September 2003.

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

No new cases of avian flu have been reported since July 2nd. Nineteen requests have been processed for drought designation from the federal government, with two designated to

date. The Ag-Stewardship Act received eight complaints in May, none in June; currently there are 24 active cases. An agricultural stewardship training is being hosted by VDACS August 26-27 for employees of local, state and federal conservation agencies that work with agricultural producers.

United States Geological Survey (USGS) (in absentia)

Drilling of the next core hole for the Chesapeake Bay impact crater study began on July 19 at Watkins Elementary School in Newport News. The core hole is near the southwestern terminus of the seismic line that was surveyed during 2000 from the core hole at NASA Langley several miles to the northeast. In addition to further stratigraphic information, data from the new hole will be crucial to analyzing the seismic profile that will delineate the deformation of aquifers caused by the impact.

Sampling of a 1300+ foot well near Kiptopeke is planned for the first week in August. The well is part of a DEQ research station at the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, and represents the deepest and farthest existing sampling point toward the center of the crater. Recent geochemical analysis of other locations have shed light on the origin and history of salty ground water associated with the crater, which probably dates from 2 million years or more ago before the Pleistocene ice age. Water near "ground zero" from the Kiptopeke well may represent a compositional "end member" that must be known to complete the story.

Staffing of the Virginia Coastal Plain ground water study was recently completed with the addition of Chuck Heywood to fill the project modeler position. Chuck transferred from the USGS New Mexico District office in Albuquerque, and brings a rich experience in developing sophisticated numerical simulations of large, complex regional ground-water flow systems. He will be undertaking an extensive revision of the Virginia Coastal Plain model upon which DEQ relies for evaluating the effects of numerous large ground-water withdrawals.

Other Updates

Josh Rubinstein of The Virginia Rural Water Association reported that trainings will be offered on source water protection on September 11 in Buena Vista and later in Hopewell and Woodstock. A mock spill is scheduled for next Thursday in Farmville. See the website <http://www.vrwa.org/sourcewater/sourcewater.htm> for a complete schedule. Activities are focused on small systems and local government, but all are welcome to attend.

Rick Woolard with Dominion Virginia Power reported that there is enough stream water and ground water to keep the Clover Facility running. They are working with the Water Board because of low flow conditions. The 20-day stock supply has already been tapped.

Francis Zaun reported that the Virginia Farm bureau will host a reception in Washington, D.C. with Congressmen to discuss the impacts of the drought.

“CAP-IT” AND “BE WATER SMART” PROGRAMS - *Lisa Meddin, James City Service Authority*

Lisa Meddin gave a presentation on James City Service Authority's new well abandonment program "Cap It." James City Service Authority has initiated a well abandonment program to protect ground water resources. When citizens hook up to public service or drill deeper wells costs often prohibit the proper abandonment of their old wells. The “Cap It” program properly abandons wells at no cost to the home owner. 50 wells were abandoned in the first year of the program. Applications are on hold pending additional funding. This unique program is cooperatively funded through the Service Authority and a grant from DEQ. The program supports the Service Authority's water conservation initiative, "Be Water Smart". For more information on “Cap It” and “Be Water Smart” visit www.bewatersmart.org

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be on Sept. 9, from 9 to 11 a.m., again at DEQ headquarters in Richmond. The date was changed due to a schedule conflict with the Children’s Ground Water Festival.