

## **Let's Coordinate Volunteer Monitoring!**

January 28, 2006  
10:00 am - 12:00 Noon  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Life Sciences Building

**To call in via conference call, dial 1-800-894-8625**

**Passcode: 0655400**

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### **10:00 - 10:10 am - Introductions**

Main Dial in

- Welcome!
  - Quickly go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves: name and organization
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### **10:15 - 10:30 am - Project Refresher - Summary of Oct 29<sup>th</sup> meeting**

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### **10:30 - 10:35 am - Goals for Today and Instructions/Rules**

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**10:35 - 11:40 am - Discuss main organization formation - "Strawman" example proposed**

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**11:40 - 11:50 am - Name - What to call this "animal"?**

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**11:50 am - Noon - Wrap up/Next Steps:**

February 18<sup>th</sup> CWQ meeting - Charlottesville:

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### *Project Refresher*

**Overall Goal is to make monitoring easier and to make becoming a monitor easier!**

- Participants at Oct 29<sup>th</sup> meeting agreed that a Coordinated Approach for Volunteer Monitoring was necessary and that forming an organization was necessary
- Approach should take advantage of/leverage collective knowledge base and skill set of its members – avoid having to “re-invent the wheel”

### **Major Points:**

- Not dampen enthusiasm that exists in individual groups, but rather build on differences and strengths
- Structured as “Bottom Up” Organization, taking direction and garnering strength from the individual member groups it was formed to represent

### **Major Goals:**

**“One Stop Shopping”** for Volunteer Monitoring - Readily Available Access to Information about (not listed in any preferential order):

#### **1. General info about Volunteer Monitoring:**

- What a volunteer monitor is
- How to become a volunteer monitor
- Schedule and location of trainings
- Upcoming Events

#### **2. Data – Needs to be Accessible and Actionable**

- How to obtain data
- How to interpret data
- Encourage data use at local level
- Encourage use of data as a teaching tool
- Was discussion about having a centralized data place (or at least the “who, what, where” of the data if not the data itself)

#### **3. Methods and Protocols**

- Types of Volunteer Monitoring
- Methods and Protocols
- Quality Assurance

#### **4. Contacts**

- Where is volunteer monitoring taking place
- Contact information for local volunteer monitoring groups
- Other types of water monitoring (see VWMC and other websites) - “launching pad”

#### **5. Funding sources and assistance**

**Training- both as monitors and as trainers**

- Training should be as *accessible*:
  - As simple as possible, consistent (repeatable), regularly scheduled and available statewide
- Recertification of existing monitors also important

**Funding**

- Organization would be a fundraising entity unto itself, able to apply for larger grants that smaller, individual groups might not be able to apply for
  - Minigrants could then be distributed to individual member groups
- Source of funding information as well as assistance for individual groups

**Events/Networking to share:**

- Technical issues
- Successes
- Presenting data
- Learn about new projects and groups

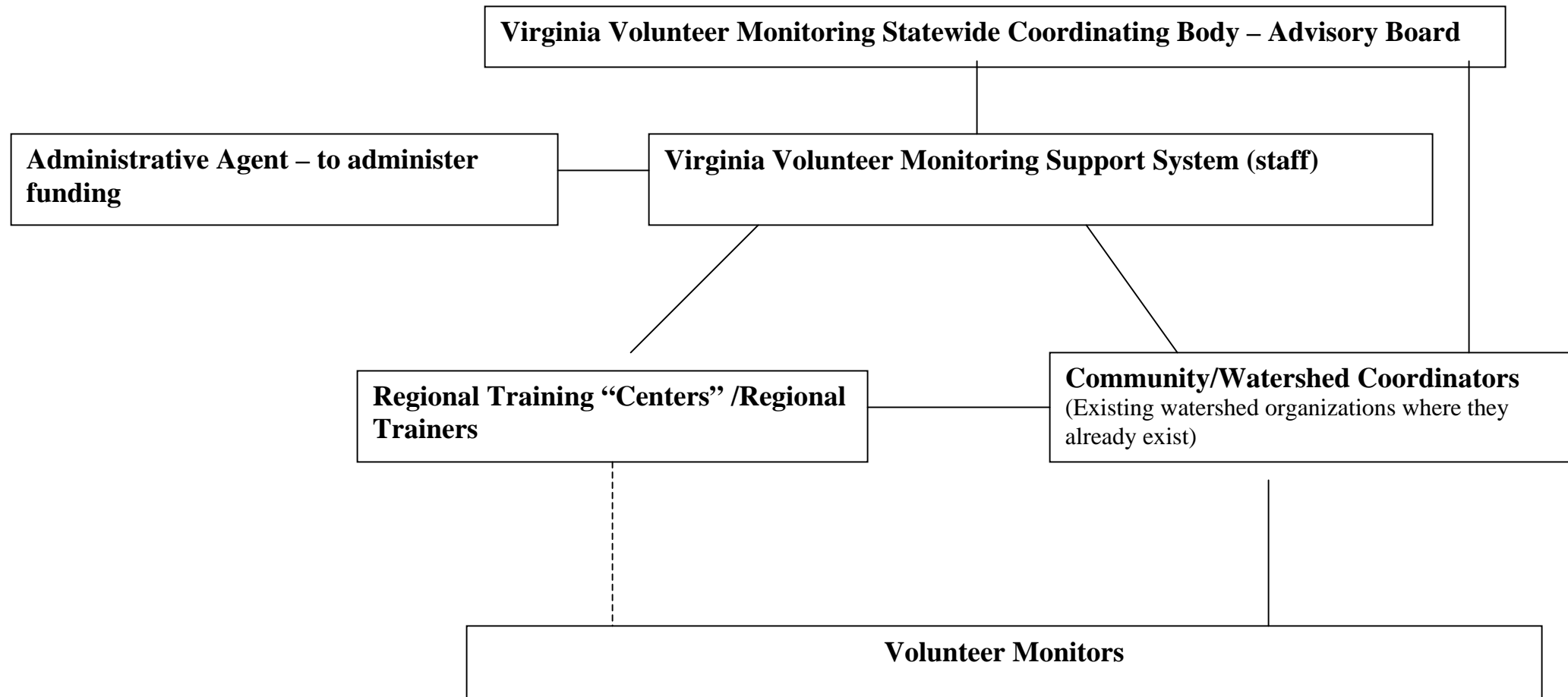
**The “Strawman” Organization** - From these 4 state programs (2 in Kentucky, 1 in Alabama and 1 in Georgia) studied in the above 2 reports, the “best” ideas + our own ideas are pulled together to form a “Strawman” that can then be torn apart/built up

**Background Documents**

[Oct 29 2005 Meeting Notes](#)

[PowerPoint Presentation comparing 4 Southeast Volunteer Monitoring Programs](#)

[Report comparing 4 Southeast Volunteer Monitoring Programs](#)



**Virginia Volunteer Monitoring Statewide Coordinating Body – Advisory Board**

Make Up of Board:

1 Representative from each watershed  
Other representatives that contribute certain knowledge, skills, or other resources

Representatives can be from agencies, businesses, universities, schools, environmental groups and municipal associations that can balance statewide geographical representation and/or can contribute certain knowledge, skills, or other resources

Meets regularly (monthly- bi monthly in 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years, then quarterly  
Members have terms (to be determined), elected

**Responsibilities**

Assist staff of statewide coordinating body with their tasks  
Develop annual workplan for statewide coordinating body

**Possible Institutional Affiliations /Administrative Agent – to administer funding**

(Possibilities- won't really discuss at this meeting but rather list some possibilities - New nonprofit organization, State agency, existing regional or statewide nonprofit, University/College, Cooperative Extension, etc.)

**Virginia Volunteer Monitoring Support Staff**

1 – 3 full time staff person (s, can include paid staff as well as volunteers – roles:

- Fundraising coordination and grants coordinator to Community/Watershed Groups
- Quality assurance and head trainer
- Volunteer coordination/outreach
- Database management (if centralized database)
- Event planner for events such as CWQ and Advisory Board meetings
- Meets regularly with advisory board

**Regional Training “Centers”**

- Regularly scheduled trainings accessible across state
- Centers don't have to be physical locations- they can be roaming, but a listing of possible locations is a good idea with standard costs (if any) and details on rental, available facilities (bathrooms, water, capacity, etc.)
- Trainings available for:
  - Program planning (developing a monitoring program, volunteer coordination, etc.)
  - Different monitoring types: biological, chemical, physical/visual , and other types as appropriate and able
  - Basic quality assured Monitor as well as Quality Assurance Trainer
  - Smaller scale trainings for volunteers that don't want to be monitors but want to volunteer for other roles - such as sample “runners” (for lab samples), lab sample “receivers, ” data enterers, data managers
  - Different levels of accessibility- quality assured as well as introduction/education
  - Data analysis and interpretation

**Community/Watershed Coordinators**

- Certified Trainers that can train new monitors of their group
- May serve Regional Training Centers also
- Responsible for data management of own groups data as well as volunteer coordination
- Apply for minigrants for funding or equipment for group

**VOLUNTEER MONITORS**

