

Jan. 28, 2006

**Let's Coordinate Volunteer Monitoring!
Summary of Conversation and Discussion**

10:00 – 10:10 am – Introductions

10:15 – 10:30 am - Project Refresher - Summary of Oct 29th meeting

See Slides 2 – 5 for review of October 29th meeting.

Review of meeting and specifically training needs led to brief discussion on need for volunteer monitoring program to market itself. We need leaders to market what volunteer monitoring is. We should think about how to maximize what we have to offer.

10:30 – 10:35 am – Goals for Today and Instructions/Rules

10:35 – 11:40 am - Discuss main organization formation –“Strawman” example proposed. The form of the strawman can from several examples of statewide organizations from the Southeast. We adopted some of the elements of their structure. One difference to be noted is the other states were not working with existing groups like we are here in Virginia.

See slides 6 and 7 for the strawman presented at the meeting.

- 1) Funding – organizations are constantly struggling with funding at the present. How do we think this larger organization will obtain funding?
 - a. Larger organization might be in a better position to go after larger grants
 - b. EPA has mandate for state's to use volunteer generated data – may be some money available for coordinated efforts
 - c. Coordinated efforts might lead to less confusion among potential funders about how Virginians monitor
- 2) Organization – how does this strawman look?
 - a. Advisory Board (top layer)
 - i. Too much going on in this layer – may need to split it up into two functions (boxes). One as a steering committee that votes on issues and is made up of representatives of volunteer water monitoring organizations. One as an advisory board that is made up of selected representatives from agencies, universities, and other interested parties.
 - ii. Structure the “voting” membership by riverbasin
 - iii. Are riverbasins too diverse both geographically and water issues?
 - iv. Tentatively decided that the steering committee consist of 13 selected representatives from each river basin and 13 elected representatives from each river basin. Any number of representatives on the Technical Advisory Board.

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

10:00 - 10:10 am - Introductions

Main Dial in

- Welcome!
 - Quickly go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves: name and organization
-

10:15 - 10:30 am - Project Refresher - Summary of Oct 29th meeting

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

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

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

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

February 18th CWQ meeting - Charlottesville:

Let's Coordinate Volunteer Monitoring!

January 28, 2006

10:00 am – 12:00 Noon

Virginia Commonwealth University
Life Sciences Building

Project Refresher

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

- Participants at Oct 29th 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

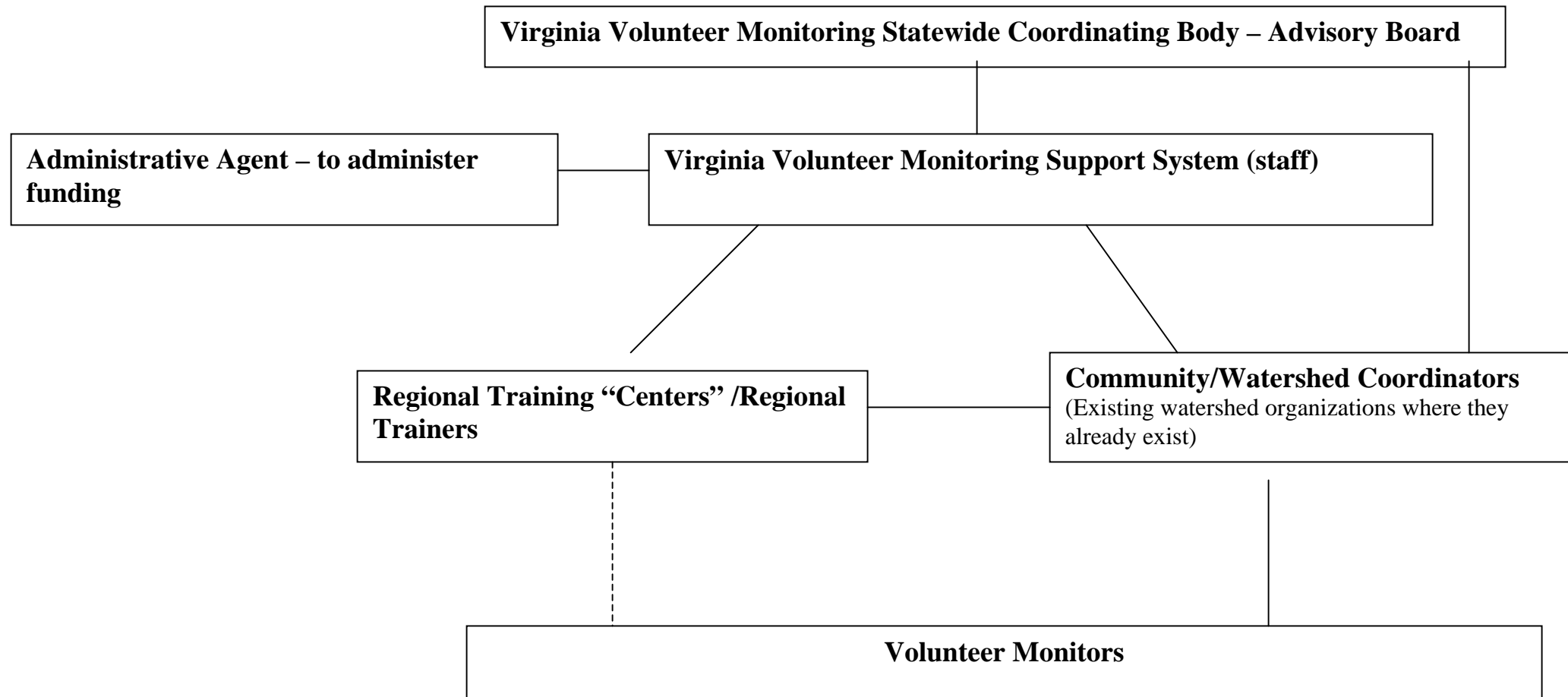
The “Strawman” Organization - From these 4 state programs (2 in Kentucky, 1 in Alabama and 1 in Georgia) studied in the above 2 reports, the “best” ideas + our own ideas are pulled together to form a “Strawman” that can then be torn apart/built up

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 1st 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

1. Since the meeting I have had some conversations with individuals that this approach might be too exclusive and too time consuming for our organization in its infancy. May want to consider giving all monitoring organizations 1 seat at the table (and we can use the opportunity of all being at the table to start talking about working on a major watershed basis) to be as inclusive as possible. If we did this approach - we may want to have a "sunset" having so many steering committee members (say in two years revisit the makeup of the steering committee).
- b. Support Staff - for this year and possibly next year, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Save Our Streams will provide the support staff needed to start up this organization
- c. Institutional Affiliation/ Administrative Agent - this is needed to administer funding
 - i. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay - need to find out their overhead/indirect costs
 - ii. Dan River Basin Association
 - iii. Virginia Save Our Streams
 - iv. Organization should obtain its own 501(c)3 designation as soon as possible.
- d. Community/Watershed Coordinators - existing (and new) volunteer monitoring groups
 - i. Need to change name of this box to Volunteer Monitoring Groups and suggest each one have a leader/ main point of contact for volunteer monitoring
 - ii. Any annual meeting ought to have a basin breakout to allow groups within each basin to connect.
 - iii. Need to check DEQ's list of volunteer monitoring organizations and Virginia Water Monitoring Council's Inventory of these organizations to make sure it is complete.
- e. Regional Training Centers - good concept - may already have training centers in place. Use existing resources/training events to help direct resources.

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

Agreement to call group Virginia Citizens for Water Quality
Acronym - VCWQ or VaCWQ

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

1. February 18th CWQ meeting - Charlottesville - PLEASE SIGN UP!

2. Stacey Brown will send out inventory of volunteer monitoring groups for all to make sure it is accurate.
3. Stacey Brown will set up new webpage (change the www.vamonitoring.org) to reflect Virginia Citizens for Water Quality name. Possible URLs are as follows:
 - a. www.vacwq.org
 - b. www.vcwq.org
 - c. www.citizensforwaterquality.org

Please let Stacey Brown know which one you want to go with and she will set it up!

4. Review minutes to provide changes and return to Stacey Brown ASAP!

Attendees

Conference Call	Name	Affiliation
yes	Karen Anderson	Friends of the Shenandoah River
	Heather Barrar	Chesterfield County Office of Water Quality
	James Beckley	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
	Stacey Brown	Virginia Save Our Streams
	John Paul Candler	Candler Communications (facilitator)
	Dick Clark	Lake Anna Civic Association
yes	Joanna Cornell	Northern Virginia SWCS/ George Mason University
	Mary Dunbar	Goose Creek Association
	Hazle W. Edens	Goose Creek Association
	Jay Gilliam	Virginia Foundation for Natural Resources
yes	Otto Gutenson	Loudoun Watershed Watch
yes	Jon Holmes	EASI
	Wayne M. Kirkpatrick	Dan River Basin Association(DRBA)
	Stacey Moulds	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
	Robin Patton	Historic Green Springs
	Nicole Sandberg	Department of Conservation and Recreation
	Jessica Schildroth	Citizens for Water Quality
	Bill Shanabruch	Reedy Creek Coalition/DEQ
yes	Llyn Sharp	VT Department of Geology Outreach, New River Roundtable
	Peggy Sleevi	Trinity High School
	George Price	Upper Tennessee Roundtable
yes	Jane Walker	Virginia Water Monitoring Council