

West Virginia Water Gaging Council
September 7, 2006
1:00 – 4:00 PM
West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Offices
Charleston, WV

Meeting Notes

Agency Representation

Agency	Present	Absent	Represented By
WV Water Research Institute			
WV Division of Natural Resources			Danny Bennett
WV Department of Environmental Protection			Nick Schaer; Dave Bassage; Mike Stratton
WV Conservation Agency			
WV Department of Transportation			
WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management			
National Weather Service			John Sikora
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers			
U.S. Geological Survey			Ron Evaldi
WV Rivers Coalition			Liz Garland
Canaan Valley Institute			
Michael Baker Corporation			Ramesh Chintala

Other Representation

None

1) Administrative Business

- a) **Call to order:** The meeting began at approximately 1:15PM.
- b) **Minutes:** Approval of June 2006 minutes were deferred until December 2006.
- c) **Discussion of DEP representation by Dave Bassage:** Dave's resignation from DEP will be effective 9-14-06.
 - i) Since the inception of the WVVGC Dave has been the primary voting representative for DEP. Nick Schaer will replace Dave as WVDEP's primary voting representative to WVVGC.
 - ii) The Council will consider Dave's continuing involvement with WVVGC after Dave is able to assess his future role with WV's water issues. (Tabled until at least 12-06.)
 - iii) The Council will consider Dave's continuing role as Vice-chair after discussion on item 1) c) iii), or at the December 2006 meeting.

2) WVVGC Direction

- a) **WVVGC Pulse:** The Council members took a "pulse" of WVVGC's successes thus far and goals for the future.
 - i) **Effectiveness:** Members agreed the Council has played a key role as a funding advocate and enabled the continuation of important programs. The Council members have used meeting formats and the Council structure to improve interagency communication and allowing gaging work to be completed more efficiently.
 - ii) **Advantages:** Members believe WVVGC is an appealing structure for sponsors. The Council offers a collection of members with diverse skill and knowledge, and abilities to connect with varying audiences including gage users, agency personnel and legislative decision makers.
 - iii) **Ability to meet future goals:** Members discussed the timing of potential funding crises with scheduled meeting dates. Because no schedule can anticipate all potential crises, the members agreed to maintain the current schedule (first Thursday of each quarter beginning in March of each year) and be prepared to have interim meetings as necessary. Council members present felt it was important to ask members not present why they were unable to attend. The members discussed the importance of many of the long terms goals related to education, funding and the assessment of gage needs, and defined some tasks for moving toward those goals (see remaining discussion).
- b) **Unfinished Business from previous meeting(s):** Members developed specific tasks.
 - i) **Outreach Action:** Ramesh will contact ASCE and keep us apprised of possibilities to educate or solicit flood plain managers. Liz will check (via Jennifer Pauer or Rick Buckley) into the opportunity to approach watershed groups at the annual fall meeting. Dave will talk to Dave Flannery about the Chamber of Commerce. Liz will contact Rita Pauley or Joe Altizer about being available to educate legislators.

- ii) Fact Sheet: The Council made final edits to the fact sheet and agreed to move forward with using the fact sheet for funding solicitation. **Action**: Members will review the draft solicitation letters and submit comments to Tammy.
- iii) White Paper: Council members agreed that the fact sheet, WVU's work, and the flood plan will serve as a good foundation to an educational document for gage users and funding decision makers.
- iv) DHSEM: **Action**: Liz will contact DHSEM (through Jimmy Gianato, George Settles or Jim Spears) to assess their on-going interest in the WVVGC.
- v) NWS Funding: John explained the NWS funding potential for IFLOWS that was presented to the Council at the last meeting. **Action**: John agreed to research the specifics of the granting restrictions and priorities, to get a copy of former OES/DHSEM grant applications, and to forward grant contact information (NWS grant contact—Steve Francis at (301) 713-0006, ext 157, or grants.gov).
- vi) WVU initiative: Ron reported that he met with Alyse earlier in the day and that she was interviewing some of the Council members about gage uses and needs.

3) Gage status and funding updates

- a) **Funding from WVDEP, Mining**: Nick reported on behalf of Mining. The department's annual funding to USGS has been "signed" and re-upped. Nick stated that increases to Mining's contribution might be made in the future if they were related to inflation.
- b) **USGS**: Ron reported on behalf of USGS.
 - i) Directives: USGS has been directed not to put money into stage only (non-discharge) gages. USGS remains committed to slowly upgrading to one hour transmits and to eliminating phone reporting gages. USGS will remove surface or groundwater gages from their web site if the agency is not responsible for regular maintenance.
 - ii) Work related to Corps funding: USGS is working with the Pittsburgh Corps to perform desperately needed upgrades to most gages along the Monongahela and many along the Ohio River. The Huntington Corps is cutting back some funding to USGS but they will assume responsibility for some reservoir gages.
 - iii) Projected changes: Two eastern panhandle well gages will be removed soon. USGS is currently assessing other changes for the upcoming fiscal year. USGS will be shifting to stronger state matches of funding. Currently Florida matches 75% and Virginia 66%. Many older WV programs still match 50% but USGS will be moving to a request for 55%.
- c) **NWS report on Corps funding**: John reported that the Corps has funds left over from the Flood Protection Plan process. Recently, Task Force members reviewed the four year old plans recommendations for gage development and operation and maintenance. Changes were made to

incorporate one hour real time and changing equipment so consistency exists amongst all gages. Costs were adjusted for inflation. Although it is not clear when and if the Corps will address this revised proposal, it seems that the Corps does have sufficient "left over" funds to cover all the projected needs. The task force will also return to the legislature for funding support.

- 4) **2007 meeting dates:** The Council scheduled the following dates to meet in 2007: March 1st, June 7th, September 6th and December 6th. (The last meeting scheduled in 2006 will be held on December 7th. **Action:** Nick will reserve meeting space at WVDEP.)
- 5) **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4PM.