

# West Virginia Water Gaging Council

## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday June 3, 2008

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Kanawha City

Room 1125 (Dolly Sods Room)

### Council Membership Representation

Organization	Present	Absent	Proxy	Represented By
<b>WV Conservation Agency</b>	X			Russ Campbell Edward Cox
<b>U.S. Geological Survey</b>	X			Hugh Bevans Ron Evaldi
<b>WV Department of Environmental Protection</b>	X			Mike Stratton
<b>WV Division of Highways</b>		X		
<b>WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management</b>	X			Bill Wood
<b>WV Division of Natural Resources</b>	X			Danny Bennett
<b>WV Water Research Institute</b>	X			Jennifer Fulton
<b>National Weather Service</b>	X			John Sikora
<b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</b>		X		
Huntington District				
Pittsburgh District				
Baltimore District				
<b>U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>	X			Tim Ridley
<b>WV Rivers Coalition</b>	X			Shanda Minney
<b>Canaan Valley Institute</b>	X			Todd Miller
<b>Michael Baker Jr., INC.</b>	X			Mohiuddin Shaik

### Other Representation

None	
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## **Administration**

The Secretary conducted a Roll-Call of the member organizations. Upon conclusion of Roll-Call, the Secretary notified the Council Chair that a Quorum had been established.

## **Call to Order and Introductions**

Russ Campbell, West Virginia Conservation Agency and Chair (Chair), called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

## **Agenda Review**

Campbell, Chair, asked if there were any additions to the Agenda. Campbell stated that he had one item to add concerning public outreach through a media release on the switching station link that is located on the gaging council webpage.

Campbell stated that he received an agenda item for addition from Hugh Bevans, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), on forming a subcommittee to go after outside sources for funding.

Mike Stratton, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), requested to have an item added concerning funding discussion of gaging program.

Stratton, DEP, requested to have an additional item added concerning the council's desire to receive a presentation on methodology of calculating 7Q10s'. This is a cooperative study between USGS, WVU and DEP.

John Sikora, National Weather Service (NWS), requested that one item be added concerning flood inundation mapping that ties into the proposed gaging upgrades.

**Action:** Hugh Bevans, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), moved to accept the changes to the agenda. John Sikora, NWS, seconded. Motion passed.

## **Approval of 3/6/08 Meeting Minutes**

Campbell, WVCA, asked if there were any additions, corrections, or comments to the minutes. Hugh Bevans, USGS, indicated that on page 4 of the March 6, 2008, meeting minutes there is a typing error on John Sikora last name. Campbell asked if there were any additional corrections. Hearing none, he then asked if there was interest in accepting the minutes with corrections.

**Action:** Mike Stratton, DEP, moved to accept the minutes with corrections. John Sikora, NWS, seconded. Motion passed.

# Unfinished Business

## Status of Switching Station to WVGWC Webpage

Edward Cox, WVCA, stated that a “Switching Station” link has been placed on the WVGWC webpage. This link will take you to a database of gages from multiple state and federal sources. This link along with the other two links of Real-Time Water Data and Flood Warning System makes this a one stop location for all your water gaging needs.

Ron Evaldi, USGS, indicated that the “Switching Station” allows an individual to find all the gages that we are currently aware of in the state of West Virginia in one location. For an individual gage there may be five or six different web pages that provide information on that gage and we have provided those links on this database. We would like the agencies to provide updates to any URL changes or new pages being added. Council members should take a moment and go to the “Switching Station” link on the webpage and try it out to see if there are any issues with the “Switching Station”. Council members providing feedback will allow for correction to the site before we make an announcement to the public of this tool on our website.

Cox, WVCA, stated that in checking links, the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gaging links were dead from the “Switching Station”. The situation was researched and it was discovered that the District had changed its URL on its gages from what we had on the “Switching Station”. The “Switching Station” was updated with the new URL and is now working.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that this could happen time to time and the only way to correct this is for someone to report a dead link.

Bevans, USGS, asked if a link to the webmaster’s email could be added for contact if a problem is discovered.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that in earlier discussion it was agreed that Ron Evaldi would be point of contact on the “Switching Station”.

Bevans, USGS, stated that Ron Evaldi, USGS, should have his name linked under the link to the “Switching Station” to go to his email for any corrections or comments.

Cox, WVCA, noted that requested changes would be given to the Information Technology (IT) staff of the WVCA for updating the webpage.

Campbell, WVCA, asked of the council member agencies, what members had a link on their agency’s webpage to the gaging council’s webpage. It was asked that each member go back and review their agency’s webpage and get with their prospective webmaster and try to get a link added to their webpage for the gaging council’s webpage.

Cox, WVCA, noted that a request to the Information Technology (IT) staff of the WVCA was made to develop a tracking system to determine how many site visit hits the West Virginia Water Gaging Council’s webpage was getting each month. Once completed the data would be presented to the council.

## Public Outreach

Campbell, WVCA, stated that with the updated webpage and the new “Switching Station” up and running that this is good news, but good news is no news if the public does not get to hear about it. We would like to see this get put into publication, print and media outlets, across the state of West Virginia. We have got to get this word out to the consumer that this information is available.

Bevans, USGS, stated that a press release is a good outlet for getting information out. This does not have to be long and would include the URL to the webpage.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that we should be prepared to provide interviews to the media on the benefits of the “Switching Station” on the webpage.

Danny Bennett, WV Division of Natural Resources, (DNR) stated that there is the possibility of Public Radio talk show and also the agency magazine could have a small article placed in it.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management produces a television show on the Library channel and thought this also could be a source to get the information out to the public.

Sikora, NWS, stated that the council would need to get with Al Lisko, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to set up a possible show on the Gaging Council and its webpage new addition of the “Switching Station”.

Bill Wood, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, (DHSEM) stated that we should go ahead and get with Al and see what his schedule is and see what is available because of the set up of programming in advance.

Sikora, NWS, stated that the council could come up with an email list of media, emergency managers and different agencies.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that a possibility could be to contact the local television stations and request that the weather person give out the information on the web address during a weather report.

Shanda Minney, WV Rivers Coalition, stated that she would have this placed on their website and would provide this information to American Whitewater to place on their website as this type of gaging information is sought after by the rafting community.

Bevans, USGS, stated that the state agency of Tourism should be looked at due to the fishing, rafting and other water events in the state.

Stratton, DEP, stated that we need to move forward with having a statement ready by next meeting for the council’s review so we can get it out to the public.

Bevans, USGS, stated that he would try to have a draft by the next meeting.

## **Status of gages under the Water Resources Protection and Management Act**

Stratton, DEP, provided the Council with an update as to where DEP stood after the passage of the Water Resources Protection and Management Act. As a result of the passage of the bill, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has funding for two new gages. To meet the needs of DEP for measurement these gages would need to be discharge gages as stage gages would not accomplish the mission. In earlier discussions with USGS, during the development of the bill, we discussed gaging needs and concluded that there were gaps on the western half of the state. This can especially be seen in the north and central part of the state where there are very few discharge gages. DEP felt that it could ask for a couple of gages to fill in this gap if funding ever became available. From this last Legislative Session, DEP received funding to set up and maintain two discharge stream gages. In the last meeting, USGS provided a listing of areas where gages are needed based upon the West Virginia Statewide Flood Protection Plan. To meet both of these needs, we should select from the USGS list of recommendations that will meet the needs of the West Virginia Statewide Flood Protection Plan and the needs of DEP for the development of a water management plan for the state of West Virginia. We have identified three locations that meet the criteria. These three sites are Grave Creek at Glen Easton, Fish Creek at Lynn Camp and Middle Island Creek at Middlebourne. In looking at this, if I was to choose, my preference would be given to Fish Creek at Lynn Camp and Middle Island Creek at Middlebourne as it would give uniform coverage for the state.

The council discussed the issue with Evaldi, USGS, Sikora, NWS, and Wood, DHSEM, all stating that there could possibly be a stage gage going online at Middlebourne. A reconnaissance would need to be conducted of the areas, but all agreed that the areas suggested would be the recommended sites. Bill Wood, DHSEM, will look into gaging at Middlebourne and respond back to Ron Evaldi, USGS, and Mike Stratton, DEP.

## **Development of a Subcommittee to Seek External Funding**

Bevans, USGS, discussed the possibility of seeking outside funding for the gaging program. He indicated that USGS could now accept private donations directly for the funding of gages. He stated that he would like to see a group go out under the name of the West Virginia Water Gaging Council rather than under an individual agency as it shows a stronger presence. Federal funding is not looking very good. Federal dollars are being frozen or reduced and new monies are not coming into the system.

Bevans, USGS, asked for a status from Michael Baker Jr., INC. on what support the company could provide as discussed during the last meeting.

Mohiuddin Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., stated that the office manager of the local office of Michael Baker Jr., INC. liked what was presented and was going to forward it to the corporate headquarters to see what support could be generated. The office manager wanted to know how much it would cost to fund a gage if the corporate headquarters provided the local office with a check.

Bevans, USGS, stated that if it was a one time funding of money that it might be better to put that money toward equipment for a gage such as a transmitter because funding a gage needs constant commitment.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that a transmitter would cost about \$2,600. He asked Bill Wood, DHSEM, what type of alert transmitters was being used now.

## **Development of a Subcommittee to go after External Funding *continued***

Wood, DHSEM, stated that they were using High Sierra transmitters and they cost about \$3,000 a piece.

Mohiuddin Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., stated that he would take this new information back to the office manager to discuss with the corporate headquarters.

Bevans, USGS, stated that he would be willing to lead a subcommittee for the council to go after financial support from outside entities if anyone was interested. This would not be a full time, but possibly making a few contacts and putting together a presentation. If a council member was interested in joining the subcommittee that they should send Hugh Bevans, USGS, an email.

Stratton, DEP, stated that he would pursue a lead with the Bill Gates Foundation as this foundation looks to provide assistance to improve disadvantaged areas.

Shanda Minney, WV Rivers Coalition stated that she had a contact person for the Bill Gates Foundation. A former employee now works for the foundation and we could contact that person.

Bevans, USGS, stated again that if a council member was interested in joining the subcommittee that they should send Hugh Bevans, USGS, an email.

## **New Business**

### **Upgrades to the West Virginia Flood Warning System**

Sikora, NWS, stated that back when the Statewide Flood Protection Task Force was developing the Statewide Flood Protection Plan, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) had funding on the books to assist. These funds have now been released by the USACE and it needed a state sponsor to upgrade the gaging in West Virginia. The USACE has partnered with Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, (DHSEM) to accomplish this mission. There has been money set aside for Flood Inundation as well. A meeting was held at the National Weather Service in Charleston, WV, with representation from USACE, DHSEM, USGS, and NWS to discuss the development of a list of gages to upgrade. Since that meeting, possibly DHSEM could shed light on the paperwork status of this.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that the status was unknown at this time. From the meeting at the NWS, the group had reduced the list to what was though there was funding for gaging upgrades. Since that meeting the list needs to be broadened based upon the amount of money available this first round of funding and another meeting needs to be set up.

Sikora, NWS, asked Wood, DHSEM, if the MOU and other paperwork is in place with USACE.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that paperwork was in place and that the next step was to hold the meeting to expand the list of gages for upgrade so that we can proceed forward.

## **Gage Funding**

Stratton, DEP, stated that it is getting close to state budget consideration time and wanted to know if West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA) was going to attempt to seek an improvement package to roll all state agencies portions of funding gages into one pot of money to pay for the state's cost share with USGS on the gages.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that the WVCA would be contributing funding at the same level as it did last year and the State Conservation Committee has not discussed any improvement packages. Due to significant request from USACE for project non-federal cost share dollars from our state agency, the addition of an improvement package this year is unlikely.

Bevans, USGS, stated that USGS will have the funding this year to match our cooperators to maintain our 50/50 match on the gages.

Stratton, DEP, asked if the Gaging Council was going to make an attempt to have a single funding source for the gages.

Bevans, USGS, asked Campbell, WVCA, if the WVCA would attempt this improvement package in the future.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that the current budgeting for the WVCA could not support this type of improvement package for the next couple of years. The initiative to consolidate the different state agencies funds into one state fund for payment of the 50/50 match with USGS on the gages should continue to be what the council seeks to achieve. Again, the WVCA would be a couple of years down the road before it can look at this initiative.

## **Cooperative Study for calculation of the 7Q10**

Stratton, DEP, stated that this was a request from Pat Campbell, DEP. DEP is in the process of testing the new WCMS methodology for calculating 7Q10s in the state. DEP has some questions about it and have set meetings with USGS to see if the program is doing what it should be doing. If the program is not, then DEP will need to go back to the programmers at West Virginia University and make adjustments. We should have this done by the next council meeting or by the following meeting. The question is since it is related to gaging, does the council want a presentation once we are satisfied that it is up and running.

The membership of the council indicated that they would be interested in seeing the presentation.

Stratton, DEP, stated that he would let the council know when DEP would be ready to give a presentation.

## **Alibis from Council members**

Russ Campbell, WVCA, Chair, asked if there were any additional comments from the membership.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that he had just received word that a gage had been installed at Middlebourne, but had not yet been hooked up for transmitting to DHSEM Headquarters. We plan to have someone check this gage out this week and make sure it is online and start reporting. The map location for Middlebourne is 3928.888 by 8052.161 with the elevation of 712 feet.

*Alibis from Council members continued*

Cox, WVCA, noted that according to the MOU of the West Virginia Water Gaging Council, the election of Chair and Vice-Chair will be conducted at the September 2008 meeting.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, Chair, stated that the council will hold elections during the next meeting of the council in September.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, Chair, asked if there was any additional business, none heard

**Action:** Danny Bennett, WV Division of Natural Resources, moved that the Council Adjourn. John Sikora, National Weather Service, seconded. Motion passed Meeting concluded at 2:54 PM.

*Respectfully submitted*

Edward G. Cox Jr.  
Secretary