

West Virginia Water Gaging Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday September 4, 2008

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Headquarters, Kanawha City

Room 1125

Council Membership Representation

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

Other Representation

None	
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Administration

Roll-Call

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 1:05 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 the election of Chair and Vice Chair.

Ron Evaldi, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), requested that gage funding update be added to agenda.

Hugh Bevans, USGS, requested that the Presentation for the Ohio River Roundtable Conference be amended to include background of the Ohio River Roundtable Conference.

Action: Hugh Bevans, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), moved to accept the changes to the agenda. Mike Stratton, West Virginia Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of 6/3/08 Meeting Minutes

Campbell, WVCA, asked if there were any additions, corrections, or comments to the minutes. Hearing none, he then asked if there was interest in accepting the minutes as presented.

Action: Mike Stratton, DEP, moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Mohiuddin Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., seconded. Motion passed.

Unfinished Business

Status of Switching Station Press Release

Bevans, USGS, stated that a press release was sent out this morning (September 4, 2008) to the council membership. A few changes were made to the document that was previously discussed.

The document was discussed by Council members.

Unfinished Business continued

Status of Switching Station Press Release continued

Campbell, WVCA, stated that once Bevans, USGS, made his touch-ups on the document that the WVCA would get it out to the media outlets through the WVCA Public Affairs Office. If any of the council membership wants this document to reach media outside the state, please contact Ron Evaldi with USGS or Edward Cox with the WVCA and they will ensure that this reaches the WVCA Public Affairs Office to get this information out to the public.

Status of WVGWC Webpage tracking by Council

Cox, WVCA, stated that tracking information was sent out to Council members on the number of visits that have been made to the West Virginia Water gaging Council's webpage. This information is tracked by the WVCA "IT" section and provided to Cox, WVCA for distribution to Council. The information provided was only 30 days of data as the tracking has just started for this webpage.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that this is a very explicit document and will be helpful.

Stratton, DEP, stated that his agency had placed a link to the WVGWC webpage on the DEP webpage and he asked what other agencies had placed the link to the WVGWC on their agencies webpage.

Bevans, USGS, stated that there was a link to the WVGWC webpage on their webpage.

Sikora, NWS, stated that they have the link on their webpage.

Stratton, DEP, encouraged all remaining Council members to attempt to have the link to the WVGWC's webpage placed on each of the agencies webpages.

Status of gages under the Water Resources Protection and Management Act

Stratton, DEP, stated that the Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of entering into an agreement with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct gaging activities for DEP. This would include the installation of two stream gages, to log some ground water monitoring wells, and to drill a new ground water monitoring well. Initially, DEP wants to get two monitors in every climatic zone and the agency's long term goal is to have a monitor in each of the HUC 8 watersheds. We now have all of our ground water wells monitored and online. Ron Evaldi, USGS, can speak to the status of the two stream gages.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that the location of a new gage at Middle Island Creek at Middlebourne was evaluated and determined to be not feasible. An alternative site that is located a little down stream on Middle Island Creek was selected. A second site will be located on the South Fork of the Hughes at McFarlan, WV. The USGS will construct these two gages sometime this spring of 2009.

Stratton, DEP, stated that this concluded the update.

West Virginia Flood Warning System Upgrades

Wood, DHSEM, stated that the state is still looking at doing upgrades to older antiquated equipment (555 Handar transmitters) that is out there which has constant conflict in the programming. The new upgraded systems that the state is considering will allow for totally separate programming. This will allow the GOES or ALERT format to be programmed independent of the other. Also this will ensure that we do not interfere with each other on the transmissions. USGS is looking at achieving one hour transmissions and the WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is looking at achieving event driven transmissions which would be real-time data.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that all efforts would need to be coordinated with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Sikora, NWS, asked Wood, DHSEM, what the status on the statewide MOU with USACE.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that there has been no word on that paperwork since the last meeting we held a couple of months ago and the only thing that is being worked between USACE and DHSEM, at this time, is the Main Island Creek project in Logan, WV.

Curran, USACE, stated that Randy Campbell of the USACE indicated that the statewide program document is 99.5 percent complete and about ready for shipment to the USACE Headquarters for approval. The funding to back the operations of this program sits in Washington, DC and has already been allocated. We should be looking at approval with funding available within a few weeks.

Sikora, NWS, stated that this looks to be on going.

Curran, USACE, stated that there are a couple of locations that USACE is hosting with the use of DHS Alert transmitters and the USACE is going to change the technology that it is using in the data collection platforms. The USACE is leaning towards the option of turning over to USGS or the State of West Virginia the USACE's 555 equipment. The reason is that this equipment will become useless to the USACE once it moves to a new type of transmitter and some of those can not be adapted. The USACE will have to go with the new High Sierra to go with the new equipment.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that this could be a place that the USGS could pick up a few of 555's to help out their agency.

Evaldi, USGS, stated that USGS was most interested in the 555's that went into the Pittsburgh USACE's area that have a 300 MOD transmitter (GOES transmitter) in them. This is so the USGS can go to a high data rate at other sites. These transmitters that the USACE would be offering would be the Alert (555's) and not the GOES. There is a possibility that they could be used as parts.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that as DHSEM moves away from the Handar to the High Sierra they would not need these.

Sikora, NWS, asked where we stood on the flood inundation mapping initiative and is it going to be tied into this upgrade.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that his agency was on hold until the MOU was completed, but that the DHSEM was still very interested and still has the \$100,000 for this. There are other sections within the agency are interested. Noting that the FEMA maps are outdated, there could be other money to assist with this initiative.

Unfinished Business continued

West Virginia Flood Warning System Upgrades continued

Cox, WVCA, stated that during the last meeting it was discussed by Wood, DHSEM, the need to set another meeting on establishing a list of gages for upgrades in first round funding.

Wood, DHSEM, stated that a scheduled meeting is still out there to be established. At this time, all parties involved are more interested in getting the paperwork side of this further along to ensure that the parameters are set for this agreement. Once this is established there should be a meeting to set up a priority list.

New Business

Ohio River Basin States Cooperators' Roundtable

Bevans, USGS, stated that USGS along with INTERSTATE COUNCIL ON WATER POLICY, the OHIO RIVER VALLEY WATER SANITATION COMMISSION and the OHIO RIVER BASIN COMMISSION went together as sponsors to set up a meeting on COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAMS. This is to look for coordination among the various entities that collect data from the Ohio River Basin. There will be representation from six states at the conference. This is to be held at the Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport. Edward Cox, WVCA, will be making a presentation on Collaborative Water Gaging in West Virginia and John Wirts, DEP will be making a presentation on emerging contaminants. If anyone is interested in attending this conference contact me.

Ohio River Roundtable Presentation on Collaborative Water Gaging in West Virginia

Cox, WVCA, stated that the presentation was sent out to Council members for their review and comments. The presentation discussed the development of Collaborative Water Gaging in West Virginia from its beginning to where we stand today. This effort began with the need for collaboration between the state and federal agencies when potential loss of gages was threatening the state from state and federal budget cuts. From this early collaboration the West Virginia Water Gaging Council was developed.

Cox, WVCA, asked if any Council member had identified any issues with the presentation.

The Council discussed the presentation and a couple of small adjustments were made to the presentation.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that the Council looked for good things to come out of the conference with the presentation that would be made by Edward Cox and wished him well on the presentation. Campbell went on to state that it would be interesting to see the tracking information on the number of visits that have been made to the West Virginia Water gaging Council's webpage following the conference.

Gage Funding

Evaldi, USGS, stated that there are two gages in West Virginia that will be losing funding as USACE, Baltimore District is pulling all of its funding for gages. This issue is having a greater impact on Maryland and Pennsylvania. USGS in West Virginia is looking at other sources to cover these losses.

Campbell, WVCA, stated that in past meetings with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), it has been stated in their presentations on the Farm Bill that there is a lot of Chesapeake Bay Initiative in that program and possibly this could be shared with the leadership of NRCS on the losses of these two gages in that region. These losses could have an impact on data that is needed for those Chesapeake Bay Initiatives. Also, CVI has great interest in this region

Greene, NRCS, stated that she would ensure that this information went forward.

External Funding

Cox, WVCA, stated that during the last meeting that a proposal went forward from the West Virginia Division of the Michael Baker Jr., INC. and asked if there was an update to this action.

Mohiuddin Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., stated that Michael Baker Jr., INC. corporate headquarters was going to place funds in the FY 2009 budget for gaging. There has not been a set amount of funding, but it is believed that the amount will cover a \$3,000 transmitter as discussed last meeting.

Campbell, WVCA, asked that Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., thank Michael Baker for their support.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Russ Campbell, WVCA, Chair, stated that the floor was open for nominations for those positions.

Bevans, USGS, stated that he nominated Russ Campbell, WVCA, to serve another term as Chair of the West Virginia Water gaging Council. Seconded by Doug Kirk, WV Division of Highways.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, stated that he would accept the nomination.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, stated that he nominated Hugh Bevans, USGS, to serve as Vice Chair of the West Virginia Water gaging Council. Seconded by John Sikora, National Weather Service.

Cox, WVCA, asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none, stated that the nominations are closed and asked for a vote on the nominations.

Action: John Sikora, National Weather Service, moved to elect Russ Campbell, WVCA, to serve another term as Chair of the West Virginia Water gaging Council and to elect Hugh Bevans, USGS, to serve as Vice Chair of the West Virginia Water gaging Council. Mike Stratton, DEP, seconded. Motion passed.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, and Hugh Bevans, USGS, received 100% of the vote.

New Business continued

National Weather Service Hurricane Report

John Sikora, National Weather Service, stated that “Gustav” is going to stay off to our west and West Virginia will probably not receive anything from this storm. “Hanna” is going to go to our east and only the eastern panhandle of West Virginia could see some rain from this storm. It does not look like West Virginia will receive any significant amount of rain anytime soon. The next chance of any significant amount of rain will come with “Ike”, but that is another week out and things could change.

Alibis from Council members

Russ Campbell, WVCA, Chair, asked if there were any additional comments or additional business from the membership, none heard

Action: Greene, NRCS, moved that the Council Adjourn. John Sikora, National Weather Service, seconded. Motion passed Meeting concluded at 2:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Edward G. Cox Jr.
Secretary