

West Virginia Water Gaging Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday December 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	Proxy	Represented By
WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)	X		Russ Campbell
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)	X		Hugh Bevans Ron Evaldi
WV Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP)	X		Brian Carr
WV Division of Highways (WVDOH)	X		Doug Kirk
WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM)			
WV Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR)	X		Danny Bennett
WV Water Research Institute (WVWRI)	X		Tamara Vandivort
National Weather Service (NWS)	X		John Sikora
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	X		
Huntington District			Tim Curran
Pittsburgh District			Robert Yue Werner Loehlein
Baltimore District			
U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	X		Angela Greene
WV Rivers Coalition (WVRC)			
Canaan Valley Institute (CVI)	X		Todd Miller
Michael Baker Jr., INC. (MBJ)	X		Mohiuddin Shaik

Other Representation

Susquehanna River Basin Commission	Ben Pratt
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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 1:08 P.M.

Russ introduced Ben Pratt of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission who was attending the meeting by telephone. Mr. Pratt is a Hydraulic Engineer and is located in Harrisburg, PA. Mr. Pratt explained that as an outgrowth of gage losses from USACE Baltimore funding reductions, he is involved in efforts to form a Pennsylvania Water-gaging Council. He hopes that such a council might provide a unified voice of Pennsylvania stakeholders to give support to gage networks. Russ welcomed Ben and offered WVWGC assistance as desired in this Pennsylvania effort..

Agenda Review

Campbell, Chair, asked if there were any additions the Agenda. None were voiced.

Action: John Sikora moved to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded and 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: Hugh Bevans moved to accept the minutes as submitted. John Sikora seconded. Motion passed.

Unfinished Business

1. Council Webpage – Record of use and efforts to publicize:

Russ stated that the web usage report was not available due to illness of WVCA computer staff and offered to send a report to the membership in the near future. Ron sent a press release to Tony Cavilier at WSAZ News and to the National Hydrologic Warning Council for inclusion in their December news letter. Russ will work with Yvonne Shepherd of the WVCA Public Affairs Office to send the press release out to a wider audience.

2. Status of gages under the Water Resources Protection and Management Act:

Brian Carr reported that the Annual Report to the Legislature has been posted to the WVDEP website. It was noted that gages are to be built at Middle Island Creek at Little, and at South Fork

Hughes River below Macfarlan. Ron stated that a Highway permit has been received for Macfarlan but not yet for Little.

WVDEP and USGS are cooperatively funding the gage on South Branch Potomac River near Springfield. The ground-water monitoring network is now funded cooperatively by WVDEP and USGS, and the 12 real-time wells are now available on the web. Four of the monitoring wells will be logged this year.

WVDEP sent a letter to WVDHSEM requesting surplus Handar 555 instruments be made available for use at non-IFLOWS gage sites in order to provide high-data-rate capability. A response has not yet been received.

3. USACE & WVDHSEM upgrade of gage equipment imitative:

John Sikora reported that he had not heard anything to the contrary that the initiative is still in progress. The program is trying to get high-data-rate transmitters, IFLOWS transmitters, and funding for real-time flood inundation mapping. The funding level is unclear but perhaps about \$600,000. May still be waiting for a signed MOU before funds are released.

4. State Cooperator Roundtables:

Prior to the WVGWC meeting, Hugh Bevans sent out information on the USGS Cooperators' Roundtables. Federal funding for the USGS Cooperative Water Program (CWP) has been stagnant, and the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) has not yet been fully implemented. To bring attention to the budget constraints of the CWP and NSIP, and to foster support and collaboration among cooperators and stakeholders, Cooperator Roundtables are being held to help shape and guide these programs through participant feedback.

The most recent Cooperator Roundtable was held September 2008 in Cincinnati, Oh, and was attended by Hugh Bevans (USGS) and Ed Cox (WVCA). Ed gave a presentation on the WVGWC and a poster was presented on the Council's web page and "Switching Station." Hugh reports that both presentations were well received.

Another Cooperator Roundtable will be held February 2009 in Philadelphia, Pa, which will focus on the Mid-Atlantic region. Hugh, Ron, and Russ plan to attend the meeting and Tamera Vandivort has expressed interest if travel arrangements allow. Russ will participate in a session on "Sustainability of Multi-Purpose Monitoring Networks" which also will include representatives of Gaging Councils for Maryland and New Jersey, and the WVGWC poster will be presented.

5. Loss of USACE Baltimore gage funding:

Ron reported that the South Branch Potomac River near Springfield gage will continue thru a cooperative agreement of the WVDEP and USGS. Allegheny Energy Power Supply Company will fund continuation of the Shenandoah River at Millville gage. Hugh added that several gages along the North Branch Potomac River have been funded for 2009 but may again be in jeopardy in 2010. The gaging station on the North Branch Potomac River at Pinto, Md, was discontinued. These gages are operated by Maryland USGS but give information needed for flood forecasts affecting West Virginia.

New Business

1. Mid-Atlantic States Cooperators' Roundtable

Previously covered.

2. Pennsylvania effort to create a Water-Gaging Council:

Ben Pratt explained that Pennsylvania is seeking to form a Gaging Council but is very early in the process and what type of structure the Council will take is not clear at this time. Russ offered that the WVVGC is willing to assist in the Pennsylvania effort. Russ went on to say that as Chairman, he has seen greater interaction among agencies and stakeholders in solving problems related to having viable gage networks. The Council members become more aware of each others budget processes and constraints. He also noted that the membership interaction has smoothed out misunderstandings in a friendly manner and has led to greater cooperation for a common goal.

Russ inquired about an article on the Susquehanna River Basin Commission web page about well drilling in the Marcellus Shale which prompted a discussion at the end of the meeting during membership final comments.

3. National Hydrologic Warning Council membership proposal:

Ron Evaldi proposed the idea that the WVVGC become a member of the National Hydrologic Warning Council (NHWC). The mission of the NHWC is to “promote the acquisition, dissemination and utilization of hydrologic and meteorological data in real-time for the protection of lives, property, infrastructure and resources, and to support the subsequent uses of the data to improve knowledge and management of the environment.” Ron presented that the NHWC is a national organization that may provide linkage to other Gaging Councils or similar groups to share ideas. Hugh offered that USGS would be willing to pay Group Membership dues for the Council for the first year and that continuation for future years could be evaluated before renewal.

Danny Bennett moved and Hugh Bevans seconded that the WVVGC accept the USGS proposal to pay group membership dues for the Council to become a member of the National Hydrologic Warning Council. The motion was passed.

4. Other new business:

John Sikora mentioned that there is a flood-warning initiative for the Logan area but was unsure about its progress. John offered to contact WVDHSEM about the Logan program and about the status of the MOU needed for securing funding for statewide gage equipment upgrades and some flood inundation mapping.

Mohiuddin Shaik offered that Michael Baker Jr., Inc., is willing to purchase a High-Data Rate transmitter to upgrade a gaging station. Gage selection for the upgrade would be at the direction of the Council.

5. Wrap-up comments from the membership:

Tim Curran – The USACE is upgrading Dam Projects to High Data Rate such as at Bluestone dam. The Rock Camp rain gage will be updated soon.

Ron Evaldi – USGS has added 30 rain gages in the Pittsburgh Corps area to its web site.

Marcellus Shale discussion:

Ben Pratt – He has had an interest in Marcellus Shale development in relation to consumptive water-use issues.

Ron Evaldi – USGS and WVDEP may install conductance monitors near the mouth of Dunkard Creek and at Point Marion in Pennsylvania because of high dissolved solids in the Monongahela River.

Hugh Bevans – Process of drilling a gas well in the Marcellus Shale requires about 1 million gallons of water per 1,000 feet of lateral to fracture the shale. Less than half of the water is recovered soon after fracturing, but is highly saline. Conductance of the Monongahela River has increased either because of gas well drilling or simply due to low stream flows and needs to be evaluated.

Werner Loehlein – Marcellus issues have hit the entire Pittsburgh District, especially on the Monongahela. Conductance to 1200 and odor problems. The highly saline brines could be impacting groundwater. Corps has been under pressure to release water from already low reservoirs in order to dilute the brine contamination. This issue is high for USACE.

Brian Carr – WVDEP is looking at the withdrawals in terms of quantity, but is not turning a blind eye to quality issues.

Meeting adjourned at 2:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Ronald D. Evaldi
Acting Secretary