

Virginia Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils
Fall Board Meeting
Thursday, October 29, 2009
Greenwood Park, Crozet, VA

Draft Minutes

(NOTE: items in ***Bold Italics*** in minutes require follow-up action)

1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM by Chairman Bill Smith. Bill welcomed everyone and said his tenure provided an opportunity to building upon the momentum generated by Jay Hubble and previous leadership. He then asked for attendees to introduce themselves. A total of 30 people were present (see attached list). A roll call of voting delegates was then conducted by Secretary Joan Comanor and 18 voting delegates were present (see * on attached attendee list).

Chairman Smith then asked for any suggestions or changes to the proposed agenda. The draft agenda was approved unanimously (motion by Don Bagshaw, second by Edwin Long). The minutes of the April 29-May 1, 2009 Spring Meeting were then approved as submitted (same motion by Bagshaw, Long). Minutes of the Executive Committee of teleconferences on June 8, 2009, and September 9, 2009, were approved unanimously by Executive Committee members.

Treasurer's Report and 2010 Proposed Budget:

Treasurer Judy Lyttle then reviewed the Treasurer's Report (copies of which were provided to attendees), which was accepted for files (motion by Bob Martin, Edwin Long, carried unanimously). She then asked that the Proposed 2010 Budget be considered as part of this same discussion; she reviewed the budget line items and it was pointed out there was no proposed dues increase for the next fiscal year. The Proposed 2010 Budget was approved unanimously (motion by Ray Rosenberger, second by Jay Hubble). The final item included in the report was the Checks and Deposits statement; a motion to accept the statement passed unanimously (motion by Edwin Long, second by Don Bagshaw).

2. **Updates on 2009 National RC&D Association Conference (Albuquerque, NM) and Virginia Rural Center Conference:**

a. National Conference: Judy Lyttle commented that there were very good workshops at the national conference and it was held in a beautiful setting, with friendly, hospitable hosts. Bill Smith commented the conference was held under a cloud due to the Federal budget uncertainty (the President proposed zero funding for the RC&D program for FY 2010). He stated we need to continue to fight to support the program and mentioned the he has been appointed to serve as the National Association's Marketing Committee Chair. Mo Lynch reported that he had attended the financial workshops and said that Councils need to be mindful of new IRS rules for 501(c)3 organizations and the tax implications. He said the new IRS Form 990 is far more extensive.

b. Virginia Rural Center Conference: Both Bill Smith and Judy Lyttle attended this meeting. Judy said it was a great conference with representatives from a variety of agencies. Bill Smith stated he plugged the need for RC&D program funding support. Attendees also discussed

stimulus funding. He further stated that the Virginia RC&D Councils were instrumental in establishing the Virginia Rural Council (Carlyle Wimbish represents the Va RC&D Association on this). Bill encouraged attendees who have rural issues that need consideration in the next General Assembly to let either himself or Glenn Sink, Executive Director of the Rural Council, know.

3. Partner Report (NRCS): Ray Dorsett, NRCS Virginia RC&D Program Manager provided an update. He reported that a new Coordinator for Black Diamond RC&D has been hired (K. D. Cook, currently a District Conservationist in Marian, VA) and will report to work on December 6. Ray said he had spent the past several months meeting with the Executive Committees of each Council, which he found very beneficial and got good feedback. Among new actions, each Coordinator will provide a report for each Council meeting as a way to keep them informed of actions. He said that the concerns expressed in the Senate's 2010 RC&D appropriation about non-performing councils was being taken seriously. NRCS national office has formed a committee to develop criteria for what a Council should be doing; the committee includes representatives of the National Association, NRCS Program Managers, and Coordinators; they should have a proposal ready in January 2010. Once it is approved, each Council will have up to one year to be in compliance or face potential consequences of loss of program support (e.g., coordinator, etc).

4. VARCDC Annual Plan of Work/Role of Vice Chair:

a. Plan of Work: Joan Comanor handed out copies of the current plan of work and reviewed it with attendees. She commented that it is too easy to develop a plan of work then file it away until the next year. She pointed out that we were on track to address most of the items identified and would prepare an update for the Spring meeting, which hopefully would show that all items had been completed.

b. Role of Vice Chair: Bill Smith asked for a discussion about the appropriate role of the VARCDC Vice Chair position. He suggested that the duties should be defined in such a way to help acclimate the person for eventually becoming chair (he commented that he had skipped that step and felt at a disadvantage as a consequence). Mo Lynch suggested that in other organizations, the vice chair was in charge of the Executive Committee, and in any case, should be given meaningful duties, rather than just standing in during the Chair's absence. Steve Pope observed that if you have a progression in office from Treasurer to Secretary to Vice Chair to Chair, it should provide good experience regarding the organization and its operation. Others commented that the vice chair could be in charge of standing committees; that the chair should focus primarily on external relations and the vice chair on internal operations; that the vice chair should have the lead in formulating the annual plan of work; that the incumbent should identify and recruit new potential leaders, among ideas. Bill Smith read the current description of duties of the vice chair from the Burgundy Book and on the website (essentially to act in absence of the chair). It was generally agreed that the duties need to be revised and ***Bill Smith said he will ask the Executive Committee to propose a new description of duties.*** It was suggested that Councils could provide example of what their vice chair's duties are as additional input, and it was agreed that ***Councils would be asked to provide their vice chair's duties.***

5. Standing Committee Reports:

Handouts were provided for each committee (see VARCDC website committee links for copies of individual reports; *Committee Chairs should submit a copy of their reports to Patrick Vincent for posting on the website.*). The following individuals presented their committee's reports:

Annual meeting/Training: Susan Adams (she pointed out that they had asked for funds to pay for a trainer for the spring meeting, which was not included in the new budget). Bill Smith said the Executive Committee would monitor the budget and consider any needed revisions. *He asked that the Training Committee submit a specific proposal if they wanted consideration for funding.* It was also pointed out that the registration fee for the Spring Meeting could include costs for training expenses.

Awards: Steve Pope asked that thought be given for nominations, which are due to Shenandoah RC&D by January 15. The Committee is also open to suggestions about what the award itself should look like.

Forestry: Lou Brossy gave an overview of the committee's activities and highlighted its new plan of work (*Dave Rickert will email a copy to Patrick Vincent for posting*).

Legislative: Joan Comanor discussed the federal budget cycle and need for Council contacts to their legislators several times during the budget process. Bill Smith encouraged attendees to thank their legislators for support of the final RC&D budget outcome and provided an example. For those who didn't vote for the final budget, he suggested asking in the letter what it would take to gain support in the future. He stressed it was important to keep them informed of what each Council is doing. Lynn Brownley suggested that the Legislative Committee should consider coordinating with VACo, VML, and similar organizations on issues of mutual interest.

Public Relations: Chris Anderson provided the report and mentioned that the Annual Report will include a new summary table to document the number of projects started, completed, ongoing, etc. by our Councils, in addition to the individual project items. Information for the report is due to Dave Roberts by November 6.

6. VARCDC \$4,000 Grants to Councils:

Bill Smith reported that only 3 Councils have requested and been approved for funding, although funds had been designated to cover all Councils. He observed that this funding should not be set aside indefinitely for this purpose and thought it would be appropriate that a deadline be set for receiving proposals. Any remaining funds after that point would then become available for general operations. A motion to set a deadline for request of the grant funds as of Spring Meeting 2010 passed unanimously (motion by Mo Lynch, second by Edwin Long).

Judy Lyttle then briefly highlighted the South Hampton Roads Council grant project (Isle be Green) to recycle plastic bags, which is an issue internationally. Joan Comanor discussed the Farm Energy website and fact sheet project of the Shenandoah RC&D Council. Eugene Morris (Old Dominion) discussed their Council's celebration of National RC&D Week that involved members, sponsors, partners and others in a social event and where the \$4000 grant check was presented to Longwood University for an alternative energy feasibility study to use a wood fired boiler and wood chips to provide 100% of their heating needs. The event was well-attended and

had good local media coverage. He mentioned this would also count as his Council's report (see agenda item 8 below).

7. **VARCDC Spring Meeting and 2009 Spring Meeting Auction Proceeds:**

a. Spring Meeting: Judy Lyttle extended an invitation to attend the VARCDC Spring Meeting on April 28-30, 2010, in Smithfield, VA, to be hosted by South Hampton Roads Council. She expressed appreciation to NRCS and South Centre Corridors to allowing Patrick Vincent to serve as their acting coordinator.

b. Spring 2009 Auction Proceeds: Bill Smith reconfirmed that 50% of the auction proceeds from spring meetings are to be provided to the VARCDC and the remaining 50% go to the host council. VARCDC received \$345.50 from the Spring Meeting 2009 auction proceeds.

8. **RC&D Council Reports:**

After lunch, each Council had a representative provide an update or highlight of a Council project as follows:

a. Shenandoah RC&D (Joan Comanor): demonstration project using goats to manage invasive species at Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton.

b. Eastern Shore RC&D (Edwin Long): Jane Corson-Lassiter is now their coordinator (Marian Huber retired last spring) and they have 3 new Council members. He also discussed their 2009 Watershed Festival and ag plastic recycling projects and announced they have a new website (www.esrcd.org).

c. Tidewater (Bobby Mallory): discussed wood waste biomass marketing project.

d. South Hampton Roads (Judy Lyttle): described Camp Young shoreline restoration project and the Elizabeth River TMDL.

e. South Centre Corridors (Bonnie Thompson): in partnership with Mission Ministries (a 12 church sponsored NGO in Waverly) opened an outreach center that provides foodbank, clothing, utility bill assistance) in a building updated with a grant from RC&D for half the funds.

f. New River Highlands (Lou Brossy): received a Conservation Innovation Grant to address unmanaged private forestland to include a lecture, demonstration and implementation assistance for up to 25 landowners, with a goal of increasing participation in forestry BMP cost-share assistance.

g. Black Diamond (Bill Smith): Blaine Delaney, Black Diamond's only coordinator ever, moved to Richmond. A new coordinator will report in December (see Ray Dorsett's remarks above). The Council is still working on the multistate project addressing water quality impacts from mining. Their litter program has expanded to 9 counties, each with a litter coordinator, and a State-level litter association is being started with hopes that all rural counties in Virginia will have a program.

h. Upper James River Area (Tammy Stephenson): reported that a group began meeting in 1990's as a roundtable and worked on developing an RC&D Area application. They have received endorsements from each county (6) and 3 cities, 3 conservation districts and 2 planning commissions; they have nonprofit status, meet quarterly, and hope to submit their application soon.

9. **VARCDC Budget Development 2010:** (agenda item combined with Treasurer's Report above).

10. **Hot Topics-Open Discussion:**

Bill Smith opened this topic by asking what do we want the association to be over the next 1 to 5 years? What is the role of VARCDC with individual Councils? Do we want to be more proactive? He gave an example of the Alabama State Association having an independent source of funding from the state. Suggestions from attendees included the following:

- Be more interactive with other organizations with shared interests (e.g., VACo, VML)
- Monitor state level legislative proposals
- Share more information about our efforts, sell ourselves, raise our visibility
- Inform state officials of who we are, what we do
- Develop a strategic plan, actions to achieve goals and vision – keep info simple!
- Identify some statewide, common programs to highlight and attract state funding
- Identify what the National Association can do to help us, such as training

Bill Smith stated he wants to establish an ad hoc committee with Steve Pope and himself to review the mission and vision statements along with the above suggestions and propose specific ideas. Mo Lynch, Lynn Bromley and Tammy Stephenson volunteered. ***Bill then asked that each Council designate a person. He will work with Patrick Vincent to develop his own contact list.***

He then asked attendees if they felt it was helpful to have an open discussion agenda item. The general agreement was yes, but have a little structure, such as a specific subject area, to make it most effective.

11. **Institute for Environmental Negotiation (co-located with UVA):**

Tanya Denckla Cobb, Associate Director of the Institute, then provided information about its services and programs. She stated that the Institute is a resource to address conflicts. There is also a Master's Degree program at UVA in conflict resolution. They have worked with a number of counties and others throughout the state to address issues about which there was little apparent consensus. See their website for more information (www.virginia.edu/ien).

12. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm (motion by Mo Lynch, second by Ray Rosenberger, unanimously passed).

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Fall Board Meeting Attendees
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<u>Council</u>	<u>Attendee (* after name indicates voting delegate)</u>
Black Diamond	Bill Smith *
Eastern Shore	Jane Corson-Lassiter, Coordinator Edwin Long * Ray Rosenberger *
New River-Highlands	Gary Boring, Coordinator Lou Brossy Jay Hubble * Bob Martin * Don Philen * David Richert, VDOF
NRCS	Ray Dorsett, State Program Manager
Old Dominion	Susan Adams * Susie Hampton * Eugene Morris * Dave Roberts, Coordinator
Shenandoah	Chris Anderson * Joan Comanor * Kathy Holm, Coordinator
South Centre Corridors	Don Bagshaw * Stacey Bradshaw * Bonnie Thompson * Patrick Vincent, Coordinator
South Hampton Roads	Judy Lyttle * (Patrick Vincent, acting Coordinator)
Tidewater	Lynn Brownley Mo Lynch * Bobby Mallory * Steve Pope * Pat Tyrrell, Coordinator
Upper James Area	Tammy Stephenson Patte Wood

