

Virginia Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils
DRAFT Fall Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 18, 2010
Virginia Department of Forestry
900 Natural Resources Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22932

Welcome and Introductions: President Bill Smith called the meeting to order at 10:12 AM. After introductions of the attendees, he announced that Chris Anderson, Shenandoah RC&D Council, will be filling in for VARCDC Secretary Joan Comanor who had an unavoidable conflict.

Roll Call of the Councils was made by the acting secretary and voting delegates identified (see attached list of attendees, with voting delegates marked with an asterisk). All Councils were represented.

Approve Agenda: President Bill Smith then asked if there were any additions or changes for the meeting agenda. Motion made by Chuck Shorter to approve the agenda as presented and seconded by Mo Lynch. Motion carried.

Approve Minutes of Spring 2010 Minutes: Bill Smith asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes of the Spring 2010 meeting. Chuck Shorter made the motion, seconded by Don Bagshaw. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Judy Lyttle presented a report on expenditures to date, as well as a proposed budget for the next year. Jay Hubble made a motion to approve the report as given, seconded by Chuck Shorter. Motion carried.

2010 Auction Proceeds: All accounting has been submitted and recorded.

Update from Virginia Rural Center Conference: Carlyle Wimbish reported that the conference was held September 13-14, 2010 in Richmond. The Center focuses on economy, education, community, capacity, infrastructure, natural resources and health care. Senator Mark Warner was the keynote speaker. The conference is open to everyone interested in issues facing rural Virginia. Bill Smith pointed out that RC&D helped the Rural Center get established 5 years ago. He made the distinction between the Rural Council whose members are appointed by the localities and the Rural Center whose members are appointed by the governor. Funding comes from federal and state sources and there are offices in Blacksburg, Richmond and Wytheville. Mr. Wimbish encourages RC&D members to get involved so that the rural voice can be heard at the General Assembly. Governor McDonnell has been interested in the Center and appointed Lt. Governor Bill Bolling and the Secretary of Agriculture to be involved. One issue they are working on is health care and getting more doctors in rural Virginia.

NRCS Report: Ray Dorsett, Assistant State Conservationist, reported that the RC&D coordinators met in August and reviewed the new RC&D manual. National NRCS Program Director Ann Dubey has retired with no announcement yet of who will fill the position. There is a new RC&D template for materials with a common logo and recurring background to help with public relations and recognition at the national level. The area plans and annual plans are up to date. Mr. Dorsett will contact a representative from each council today for questions and to get their signatures of approval.

With the recent mid-term elections, it is uncertain what the impacts will be financially to the councils. Currently there is concern that a hiring freeze may be put in place and there have been discussions of budget rollbacks or cuts. With new representatives in Congress, this legislative session will be very important to the RC&D program.

A new forestry agreement has been signed with the Department of Forestry to add two more RC&D foresters. In addition to Dave Richert, Joe Lehn and Pat Murphy will spend approximately 25 percent of their time on extending forestry to the RC&D councils with workshops, tours, trainings, demonstrations, and individual forestry projects and activities.

On the personnel front, Helen Heck, secretary of the Tidewater Council has resigned and unfortunately, there is no funding to fill her position. A round of applause was given to Kathy Holm for being recognized as 'Conservationist of the Year' by the Soil and Water Conservation Society. Patrick Vincent was recognized for 10 years of federal government service. Dave Roberts is moving to upstate New York beginning January 30, 2011; he accepted a position with NRCS as a grazing specialist. Mr. Dorsett gave him mementos from the RC&D/NRCS. Dave said he enjoyed working with the RC&D councils and wishes us all the best. Bill Smith thanked him for his service. In closing, Mr. Dorsett said we need to adapt our mission to coordinate with other state initiatives for the best effect of our efforts.

VARCDC 2010 Plan of Work Implementation:

Steve Pope went over the vision, mission and goals of the 2010 work plan and mentioned there has been a paradigm shift in DC with the elections so it is important to maintain our established goals – particularly when it comes to funding. The question was raised of whether Congressman Goodlatte would become the Chair of the House Agriculture Committee. It was felt that it would be good to let him know we would like for him to continue. The Upper James River RC&D is revising its application in order to satisfy new manual requirements with Kathy Holm's assistance. They received their nonprofit status and have had very productive meetings. Mr. Pope said it is good to show how many jobs are being created as a result of the RC&D efforts and that we are a valuable partner.

2011 VARCDC Plan of Work, Vice Chair's Role:

Steve presented a proposed 2010-2011 VARCDC Plan of Work, which was approved.

Standing Committee Reports: Reports were provided by the following committees:

1. Annual Meeting/Training: Susan Adams said the spring 2011 annual meeting will be held in Blacksburg. One proposed training topic to be covered is how Councils can apply for and why they would want an indirect cost rate, which is the way a council can receive approved administrative costs for federal grants. Suggestions for additional topics were requested. These should be given to Gary Boring.
2. Awards: Don Philen offered to contribute \$500 to the awards committee for their needs, however it was later determined that the budget already contained funding for plaques and travel for the 2011 awards committee.
3. Forestry: Dave Richert recognized Lou Brossy for his many hours of service on the committee and said the annual report of accomplishments was accepted at the last conference call of the VARCDC Forestry Committee. Highlights include the new partners gained, grant reporting, forestry program display at the SE RC&D conference in Biloxi, the finalized annual plan of work, and the strategic plan link to VA Department of Forestry and the RC&D forestry program. The *State of the Forest* report is done and is available on line. Chairman Smith said this link should be added to the RC&D website if it is not already there.

4. Legislative Committee: Letters to elected officials are critical and new relationships are needed. We need to stress we are a value-added program – we create a whole lot out of very little. It was mentioned that the Legislative Committee needs to brainstorm about how to enhance our capabilities. This is going to be a challenging year to protect our budget as we lost Tom Perriello and Rick Boucher who were strong advocates for the RC&D councils. We need a strategy to reach out to our new representatives.

5. Public Relations Committee: Dave Roberts was eager to give one more report before his departure north. He said success stories are needed for the annual report and should be submitted with photos to Kathy Holm or Jane Corson-Lassiter ASAP. There will be a display at VA Soil and Water Conservation District annual meeting in Roanoke. National headquarters has good templates and guidance for the stories. Patte Wood, of the Upper James River RC&D applicant area questioned whether they should contribute and Chairman Smith said yes, the bylaws state applicant areas have the same status as the oldest council. The question was raised on whether they should pay the annual dues of \$575 and whether or not they received an invoice. This will be determined. Ms. Wood has contacted Congressman Goodlatte of the good work accomplished by the Upper James RC&D council.

6. Nominations Committee: Jerry Walker gave a report from the committee. He said that the current officers have agreed to continue in their rotation. Steve Pope has been nominated as chair, Joan Comanor as vice chair, and Judy Lyttle as secretary. There are two nominations for treasurer, and a discussion ensued over whether both names submitted for nomination for treasurer (Chuck Shorter and Don Bagshaw) should remain on the ballot. The following questions were raised: can the VARCDC conduct votes on these nominees by e-mail or does it have to be a written ballot? And, can there also be nominations from the floor? Ray Rosenburger made the motion to leave both names nominated for treasurer on the ballot. It was seconded by Carlyle Wimbish. Motion carried. Jerry added that VARCDC votes need to be submitted by January 1. Mo Lynch made the motion to close the nominations, seconded by Carlyle Wimbish. Motion carried.

VARCDC \$4000 Grants to Councils Updates: Bill Smith called on each Council to provide a brief update of their \$4,000 grant expenditures, noting that a final report will be needed from each council detailing the work accomplished.

a. Shenandoah – Kathy Holm reported on the work by JMU professor Dr. Maria Papadakis, and the Virginia Farm Energy Project in which fact sheets were created on onsite solar and wind energy. They are currently working on web pages with students with the assistance of Old Dominion Electric Cooperative. The site should be finalized by mid-January.

b. Eastern Shore- Edwin Long reported on the new Rural Health System building at which a 'healing garden' will be created. Native plants will be labeled for easy identification by the public. The garden, which will also serve as a wetland storm water management tool, will be completed by spring 2011. \$16,500 in funding was generated because of receiving the \$4,000 grant.

c. Tidewater – Mo Lynch reported on a waste wood utilization project and the jobs which will be created. The project will provide a forum for ash studies. They are currently seeking investors and the next step is to prepare a prospectus for potential industries. This project will have leverage \$5 for every \$1 received.

d. South Hampton Roads - Judy Lyttle reported on the Isle of Wight program 'Isle be Green' which promoted recycling through art classes. Five schools collected more than 2,000 pounds of bags. More elementary school art classes will participate this fall.

e. South Centre Corridors Don Bagshaw reported on the VA Cooperative Extension project for farm energy efficiency. A thermal camera was purchased in August for energy audits. Also 21

agricultural professional participated in a grain drying project. The University of Kentucky discussed equipment, systems and costs.

f. New River-Highlands – Jack Ashbury reported on their alternative energy workshop held April 20, 2010, targeted to county, city, town facility managers, school boards and private industrial developers. Basic and technical info was covered on biomass energy and its appropriateness at a given site.

g. Black Diamond- Roger Blackstone reported on an ongoing project targeted to contractors and homeowners to increase efficiency in energy consumption in remodeling and new construction. \$100 had been spent on flyers and letters and speakers and exhibitors have been contacted. Black Diamond is sponsoring the summit which will be completed in this fiscal year.

h. Old Dominion is partnering with Longwood College to provide a feasibility study on biomass alternative energy. \$4,000 has leveraged \$10,000 from Longwood and \$10,000 of in-kind contributions.

2011 VARCDC Spring Meeting: Chuck Shorter reported that the spring meeting will be held in Blacksburg on April 27-29, 2011. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hawthorne Inn at \$70/night including a hot breakfast. The teaching arena at Virginia Tech has been reserved for meeting space. The awards banquet will be held Wednesday night with tours on Thursday to view stream bank restoration, Firewise projects, the Radford green infrastructure project, etc. Chuck is hosting the auction at his farm. Registration is \$150. \$2500 is needed for sponsorship. There is a finders' fee for those who find sponsors. Advertisement mailings will be sent out February 15.

RC&D Council Reports: Bill Smith called on each Council to provide an update on their activities.

a. Shenandoah – Joe Lehnen reported that the council has received a \$700,000 National Fish and Wildlife grant for farm to table conservation and nutrient reduction. Education will focus on consumers having a part in cleaning up the Bay by supporting farmers who are improving water quality. On the urban front, there will be lawn fertilization education. Efforts will be made to link locally produced foods to institutions. Incentives will be offered to farmers who are making nutrient and sediment reductions by promoting the products produced on their farms. A Bay-friendly logo will be created to improve marketability of water-quality friendly locally produced foods. Partners include Water Stewardship, Buy Fresh Buy Local, Washington & Lee University, Lexington/Rockbridge Grows, Virginia Cooperative Extension and others.

b. Eastern Shore – Edwin Long reported they have received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation fund grant for \$500,000 with a \$800,000 match. Cleanup efforts will focus on the Nanticoke watershed with many partners for the three year grant. They are taking a whole community approach with urban and rural efforts to reduce nonpoint pollution with better stormwater management. Projects include two bioretention areas in parking lots, rain water harvesting workshops a Virginia Tech project for advanced nutrient management system for precision fertilizer application. Two miles of buffer restoration will occur in the watershed.

c. Tidewater – Robert Mallory described a Navy project where wetlands will be constructed at range station. Stormwater will be filtered through a marsh for improved ecological health.

d. South Hampton Roads – Judy Lyttle reported on their TMDL projects over last year. They started an Environmental Education mini-grant program. One project for shoreline restoration at Camp Young received an award. It is an ongoing project.

e. South Centre Corridors- Don Bagshaw said they printed the first 'Buy Local' publication to promote locally grown items on 32 farms, CSA's, specialty stores and restaurants. They also printed a 'living in your watershed' booklet for fourth graders. An awards banquet was held to observe National RC&D week and to highlight the individuals who have distinguished themselves with their projects.

f. New River-Highlands – Jay Hubble said 14 projects were completed and 14 adopted. Projects included a TMDL effort for the city of Richmond, an USACE ‘in lieu’ program, a forestry project, a septic system repair project, a grazing management initiative, a grant writing mini workshop and a specialty crop and marketing project to promote local foods. New River Highlands is also hosting the 2011 SE conference.

g. Black Diamond – Roger Blackstone said they hosted a forest tour with multiple partners covering topics of deer management, prescribed burning and uses of slate piles from mining operations. Cranes Nest River received a national award for their cleanup efforts. Students and The Nature Conservancy restored an outdoor classroom at a mountain top removal site by planting American chestnuts which improved wildlife habitat.

h. Upper James River – Patte Wood said they had started stream monitoring with schools, held an equine and water quality workshop, hosted the Upper James River Trail meeting, worked with the National Park Service and received a grant for technical assistance for a master regional plan focusing on trails, blueways, rails and tourism. The grant which covers one year will be used to create a strategy to implement the plan. Additional grant funding will be sought.

i. Old Dominion – Carlyle Wimbish reported on a fire management day in which 98 students and 11 volunteers participated. Many partners helped to offer training for coordinators and cover such topics as chainsaw safety, boating and fire safety, tractor safety, a power takeoff demonstration and firearm, ATV, food and first aid safety. The event served as a National RC&D day observance.

VARCDC 2011 Budget: Judy Lyttle reported that the Forestry Committee requested \$200. An additional revenue stream will be realized with the James River Council paying dues. Joe Lehnen moved that the budget be approved as presented, seconded by Edwin Long. Motion passed. Chairman Smith remarked that Councils are handling their budget shortcomings differently. If the councils appreciated the \$4,000 grants which came from the \$30,000 gained from hosting the SE Conference then we need to talk to potential funders through the state association to make grants to the councils.

Strategic Plan Update: Steve Pope went over the current strategic plan pointing out specific goals for discussion. He is in the process of putting together the next five year strategic plan and really needs input from other VARCDC members. He would like to know whether or not to keep, modify, or delete particular goals. For instance, in the current plan, Goal 4 says expand the RC&D program to have 100% coverage. Discussion ensued regarding the increased needs in rural areas such as housing, septic installation and repair, home weatherization and economic development and whether we need to focus as much on the metropolitan areas. Mo Lynch said the Center for Rural Virginia has a definition of rural, sub rural, etc which may be helpful. Discussion ensued over Goal 6, Objective B and the Virginia Water Policy Progress. Clarification was needed on the process and who is involved. Steve Pope pointed out that we need to be familiar with this document and follow the goals if it is to be a valuable planning tool. He provided his email (steven.pope1@verizon.net) and solicited feedback on the Plan. Chairman Smith said that we have not been scoring our completed projects against our five year plan. He called for volunteers to serve on a committee to assist Mr. Pope in creating a reporting system and to review the old and prepare the new five year plan. Dave Richert, Mo Lynch and Bill Smith will serve on the committee with Mr. Pope.

Southeastern Regional Meeting Update from Attendees:

Virginia had a strong presence at the conference and received a lot of recognition at the awards ceremony and all councils gave success story presentations. It was noted that in the future each council should arrange for a proxy vote if they cannot be in attendance. Discussion ensued over the vote for SE President taken at the SE conference. Jay Hubble made a motion that Bill

Smith proceed to call for an examination of the by-laws, clarification of certain fiscal and voting procedures and to represent the Virginia Association, seconded by Don Philen. Motion approved.

Other Business: none

Adjourn:

Joe Lehnen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jay Hubble. Motion approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson for Joan Comanor

**Virginia Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils
Fall Meeting Attendees**

Council Members: (voting delegates shown with *)

Black Diamond:

Roger Blackstone*
Bill Smith

Eastern Shore:

Edwin Long*
Butch Nottingham*
Ray Rosenberger*

New River-Highlands:

Lou Brossy
Jay Hubble*
Don Philen
Chuck Shorter*

Old Dominion:

Susan Adams*
Susie Hampton
Carlyle Wimbish*

Shenandoah:

Chris Anderson*
Joe Lehnen*

South Centre Corridors:

Don Bagshaw*
Jerry Skalsky*

South Hampton Roads:

Judy Lyttle*

Tidewater:

Mo Lynch*
Robert Mallory*
Steve Pope
Jerry Walker*

Upper James River:

Patte Wood*

NRCS Attendees:

Ray Dorsett, State Program Manager
KD Cook, Coordinator, Black Diamond

Jane Corson-Lassiter, Coordinator, Eastern Shore
Gary Boring, Coordinator, New River-Highlands
Dave Roberts, Coordinator, Old Dominion
Kathy Holm, Coordinator, Shenandoah
Patrick Vincent, Coordinator, South Centre Corridors
Pat Tyrrell, Coordinator, Tidewater

Other Guests:

Charlie Becker, Va DOF
Patrick Murphy, Va DOF
Dave Richert, Va DOF
Joe Lehnen, Va DOF
Ed Zimmer, Va DOF