



Soil and Water Conservation Society

Virginia Chapter

Minutes of February 18, 2004

Attendees:

Dawn Shank	Kilby Majette
Alyson Sappington	Stu Wilson
Jackie Byars	Larry Wilkinson
Don Wells	Gene Yagow
Theo Dillaha	Mary Leigh Wolfe
Phil McClellan	Dan Lungsford
Adrian Harpold	

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by president elect Stu Wilson.
Minutes & Treasures Reports

First item of business was minutes from the November 2003 meeting. Grammatical errors and a mistake in Attachment 1 to the minutes (Financial Report) were noted and corrected. The expense item of miscellaneous of \$43.00 was left off the sheet but was included in the total expense amount. Motion made by Don to approve the minutes as corrected; Seconded by Alyson. Motion Passed.

Dawn arrived at the meeting and took over responsibility of presiding over the meeting. Larry gave the treasurer's report. Several discussion items came from the report. The savings account was converted into a CD and is now currently shown in the total CD amount on the report. Confusion over new membership fees rose from the Annual Meeting in Richmond. Sarah King paid for the workshop and the membership fee with one check. Larry cashed the check and re-issued a chapter check to Ankeny for her membership. Dawn will check with Ankeny to make sure she is on the list. Brain Benham also joined the society at the Annual Meeting but has not shown up as a member. Since he paid cash, Theo recommended that Larry send him a check to cover the membership fee and Mr. Benham can register on line. Also an item called correction was added to the income and expense columns to correct errors within the checkbook.

Committee Reports

Awards-Kilby

Discussion was held by the group on the timing of the nominations and whether to present awards at the VA SWCD Association meeting or the SWCS Annual Meeting. Jackie mentioned that Denise Doetzer, NRCS State Conservationist, had offered to allow SWCS to hold their award presentations during the NRCS luncheon at the VASWCD meeting. Jackie felt this would be a captive audience for the recipients. Mary Leigh felt that SWCS should continue to have these presentations at its Annual Meeting. Alyson mentioned that she felt more effort should be made to get a larger audience available for those that are receiving the awards. Dawn said that some of the

problem last year was the lack of nominations that slowed down the process and was the reason the awards were not presented at the annual meeting. Kilby will plan on getting the nomination applications out in May-June and request that nominations be returned by August. This will allow us to make selections of awards by the Annual Meeting.

Kilby also reported that he had completed the annual report and submitted it to the region. He also submitted awards applications for Outstanding Chapter, Professional Development, and Chapter Achievement. Theo said the region was impressed because Virginia was the only chapter that had its paperwork submitted on time.

Membership

The only new member on the latest Ankeny list for Virginia is Tom Benzing at JMU. He is interested in getting more scholarship information for his students. Dawn has sent a letter welcoming new members to the chapter.

Legislative

Don Wells mentioned several legislative issues before the general assembly this year. The first was the Virginia Natural and Historic Resources Fund. It would be funded by a \$10.00 fee from a recordation tax. This money will be split with 40% going to Virginia Land Conservation Fund, 40% to the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund, and the remainder being allocated directly by the Secretary of Natural Resources.

The second item discussed was a bill allowing the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to convey a permanent easement of 1 acre in the Mattaponi River to the City of Newport News for water supply. Also another bill on this same issue would do away with the VMRC permitting process.

A bill to establish a Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry has also been introduced. This position would oversee the Department of Forestry, Milk Commission, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Agricultural Council and Virginia Marine Products Board.

The storm water management bill has passed the Senate. This bill would allow the consolidation of the storm water management programs in DCR and would transfer oversight responsibilities to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Gene asked if this would include the MS4 program and Stu commented it would. This bill could provide for new staff at DCR.

A bill designed to specify the roles of soil and water conservation districts has passed the House and is in the Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Senate committee.

The last legislative issue Don discussed was the Senate Bill 523 which proposes that a watershed coordination program be implemented by the state. This bill was encouraged by the Izaak Walton League. The VASWCD opposes the bill because it would take money from the Water Quality Improvement Fund that is being used by districts. Alyson asked how this would be different from the tributary strategies already in place but not funded? Stu said this would be by basin and written in the code. Don also added that this would be a state wide watershed coordination program.

Don also mentioned that the budget proposed by the governor has been disapproved by the General Assembly. The proposed budgets by the governor and the senate both raised sales taxes; while the House budget would raise taxes on businesses. Both sides appear to be in a stand off and the budget will probably be sent to a conference committee. The largest concern with all budget issues is that Virginia could lose its AAA bond rating.

Dawn asked if there were any items on national legislation. Kilby mentioned that NRCS did have an approved budget for FY2004; Virginia has gotten EQIP allocations this year for 9.8 million dollars. The Conservation Securities Program is still in the rule making period. This program rewards landowners and farmers who have done conservation work on their farms. The comment period ends sometime the first of March and comments can be given on the NRCS website.

Don mentioned that Stephanie Martin at the VASWCD could provide reports from their tracking program for use in talking points for the rule making period. Theo was asked to post these reports on the Virginia SWCS list serve.

Spring/Summer Workshop

Alyson and John Myers have discussed what could be done for the workshop. Currently they have two ideas: holding a technical meeting at Wintergreen golf course in Nelson County with the topic of Storm Water management as an issue, and holding an overnight camping opportunity for members and their families at a state park.

Dawn asked Kilby what the policy was from NRCS on employees attending a non-technical event. Kilby said that official time and equipment could not be approved for a "fun" summer event.

Theo said the technical meetings are what really draws people and gets more membership than holding a less formal event. Dawn also mentioned the idea of holding the environmental golf tournament for a fundraiser in conjunction with the technical meeting. Wade Biddix agreed to help if we decide to set up the tournament. Adrian mentioned a new golf course called The River Course near Blacksburg that may be a possibility for the tournament. Dawn also mentioned inviting other states to the golf tournament to increase profit and networking. Mary Leigh also mentioned the possibility of a canoe trip as a fun event for families. Jackie suggested that all this be sent to a committee to work out the feasibility of all the suggestions (i.e. golf tournament, wintergreen technical workshop, and/or possibility of a camping or canoeing "fun" family event). Committee consists of: Alyson Sappington, John Myers, Dawn Shank, Theo Dilaha, Kilby Majette, and Jackie Byars.

Student Chapter activities

Adrian Harpold and Dan Lungsford attended from the student chapter at Virginia Tech. Adrian currently serves as president and Dan is treasurer for the group. The student chapter has several activities planned; including a Save Our Streams program for a local school and clean up activities along a local stream. Their biggest current project is planning the Careers in Conservation Symposium. The program would be available to college and high school students to attend to learn more about the job opportunities in the field of conservation. They plan to have non-profit, government, private industry, and organizations to give presentations and be available for questions.

The chapter would like a SWCS member to attend to provide support and be a speaker for the event. The chapter also requested \$300.00 from the Virginia Chapter to provide refreshments for the event. The symposium is scheduled for March 25 from 6-9pm. Dawn is unable to attend but Stu is going to see if he can make it.

Another financial request made by the student chapter was appropriations from the council to attend the International meeting in St. Paul. They anticipate 2-3 members being interested in attending.

Budget

Mary Leigh presented the draft budget for 2004. She used actual totals from the 2003 budget and included some items she had found in previous budgets. She believes the council needs to approve language for the chapter that would allow the treasurer to automatically distribute funds for items already approved in the budget. Only budgeted items that went over the projected amount should come back to the council to vote on. Several items were added or deleted from the proposed budget.

- Newsletter expenses \$100.00
- Postage expenses \$50.00
- SE Chapter Development Workshop expense \$200.00
- Copying & Supplies expenses \$100.00

Kilby also mentioned the possible need for restocking speaker gifts for trainings and workshops. Stu said that funding for that could come from the meeting expenses rather than a separate line item in the budget since it is not a yearly expense.

The council also discussed the expenses to be allowed to the student chapter to attend the International meeting in July. A motion was made by Gene to pay up to \$500.00 in registration fees for student member and allow \$500.00 to be split among those attending for travel expenses. The motion was seconded by Mary Leigh. Motion passed.

The request made by the student chapter was for \$300.00 for refreshments for the Careers in Conservation Symposium. Motion was made by Stu and seconded by Larry. Motion passed.

Mary Leigh will make the necessary changes to the draft budget and email to council members for review.

Old Business

Regional Workshop

The workshop being hosted by the Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter in North Carolina includes the Virginia and South Carolina chapters. Theo encouraged members to attend the workshop. He will distribute the draft agenda to Virginia members via the list serve.

National Meeting

Stu will be the chapter representative for the international meeting in Minnesota July 24-28. Dawn won a free registration last year and may attend. Kilby is also

thinking about attending. Theo and Jackie have submitted symposia topics but were not selected by the committee. Theo and four possible members will be giving a presentation similar to the ABC of TMDL's workshop held last year's regional workshop. Theo encouraged Stu to attend the International Chapter Development Workshop held on July 24th.

Ankeny Request for Money

Dawn had no report on the \$2000.00 request from Ankeny. She has received a request from the International Meeting sponsors for silent auction items. Don mentioned that the VA SWCD Association held a live auction rather than the silent auction they typically hold and discovered that more money was raised with the live auction. Dawn said she would pass this information along.

VASWCD Education Foundation

Dawn proposed the Virginia Chapter sponsor two scholarships from its personal accounts to fund the scholarships usually funded through the VASWCD Ed. Foundation in SWCS's name. The foundation has decided not to provide any scholarships this year to try to reconcile its shortfalls. Jackie asked how long the Foundation believes it will take to straighten out their current circumstances. Kilby said that a special committee had been assigned to investigate options to correct the funding deficiencies. Theo had already told student chapter members that the scholarships would not be available this year. Gene made a motion to provide two \$1000.00 scholarships this year only. Motion was seconded by Stu. Motion passed.

The application currently used by the Foundation will be reworked so we can use it for the SWCS scholarships as well as the ranking system they have in place. Larry asked who the checks would be paid too. Dawn said the checks would go directly to the college or university to offset expenses. Money would not go directly to the students. A committee consisting of: Dawn Shank, Larry Wilkinson and Mary Leigh Wolfe will review criteria applicants and they will select the scholarship winners. Currently enrolled college students in environmental fields will be considered.

New Committee Members

Dawn has invited Billy Jean Elmer and Brain Benham to serve on the technical committee. She contacted them via email last week and has not gotten a response yet from either.

Donation for National 4-H Wildlife Contest

Dawn has written a letter to the coordinator telling them they would be receiving a donation from SWCS. Larry will send them a check.

New Business

Annual Meeting

Phil has been working on the idea of focusing the Annual Meeting on TMDL's. Possible topics include: TMDL implementation plans development guides, funding opportunities, BMP's, selling participations, overview of VA TMDL, Ag Stewardship Act

effects on TMDL's, field trip to Middle Fork of the Holston River or Blackwater in Franklin County. Possible locations are in Blacksburg, Charlottesville, or Roanoke. We could invite other states to participate and give an overview of TMDL's in their states. A committee of Phil, Mary, Theo, Gene and Stu will meet and report back to the group. A question was asked about DCR co-sponsoring the event. Stu said they only have two staff members left that work strictly with TMDL's and that DEQ would be a larger player to invite to cosponsor. Theo said that extra effort needs to be given to publicizing the program to districts across the state. Phil also brought up the idea of inviting someone from the Cannan Valley Institute to speak on the program.

Newsletter

Theo will be working on the spring newsletter shortly. Anyone with articles please get them written and to Theo to use in the next issue. Topics for the newsletter discussed were: Awards, Clemson and Asheville meetings and summer meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2004 via video conferencing. Meeting adjourned at 12:10.

Respectively Submitted:

Jackie S. Byars
Chapter Secretary

Attachment 1

Financial Statement
Virginia Chapter of SWCS

Ending Balance as of February 18, 2004	
CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$ 10,235.94
SAVING ACCOUNT	\$ 0.00
CD (as of Jan. 31, 2004)	\$ 17,102.18
TOTAL	\$ 27,338.12

<i>INCOME</i>	
SWCS chapter dues Jan. - July 2003	\$ 405.00
Workshop Registrations	\$ 2,400.00
Interest From Checking	\$ 2.90
Corrections	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,832.90

EXPENSES	
Dawn Shank International Meeting	\$ 591.84
Dawn Shank Workshop Food	\$ 112.75
Dawn Shank SWCD reception expenses	\$ 180.00
SWCS membership (Sarah King)	\$ 75.00
Kilby Majette Postage & Certificates	\$ 136.90
Kilby Majette Postage	\$ 22.49
Dagwood Deli Workshop Food	\$ 770.90
Deposit Corrections	\$ 35.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,924.88