

VIRGINIA ROANOKE RIVER BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Danville, VA

VRRBAC members present: Mike McEvoy, Delegate Tommy Wright, John Feild, Bill Lindenmuth, Bob Jean, Haywood Hamlet, Read Charlton, Senator Frank Ruff, Delegate Charles Poindexter, Walter Coles, Billy Martin, John Lindsey

Staff present: Tammy Stephenson, VA DEQ

Call to Order

Chairman McEvoy- called the meeting to order, introducing everyone in attendance.

Mr. McEvoy mentioned that the Dan River Foundation had prepared a summary of uranium mining studies and copies were available.

Minutes

The minutes from the August 13, 2011 meeting were approved upon a motion by Mr. Hamlet, seconded by Mr. Charlton, and unanimous vote of the Committee

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Hamlet said there was no report for the Ag/Forestry Subcommittee

There was no report for the Lake Interests Subcommittee. Mr. McEvoy said he would like something on upcoming agenda regarding weed programs and suggested a representative from Lake Gaston come prepared to discuss their efforts.

Mr. Lindsey said there was no report for the Permit Holders Subcommittee

There was no report for the Public Officials and Government Entities Subcommittee

Mr. Charlton said there was no report for the Roanoke River Interests Subcommittee.

RRBAC Follow Up

Mr. McEvoy wanted to give members a chance to comment on the two studies presented this morning:

- Sen. Ruff was concerned with the scope of the studies done thus far. Lakes are an economic tax base for these communities and need to be protected.
- Mr. Jean added that there was a lot of money spent for studies, yet they have no recommendation regarding uranium mining. He felt they should have made a conclusion.
- Mr. Charlton said issues are 1) tax base, 2) liability questions, and 3) regulatory (public money); how can state legislators make a decision with so many unknowns.
- Delegate Wright gave a legislative update. He said the legislature did not take the issue up this year, instead directed a study be done to get input from the public. It is a difficult issue to get your arms around, try to look at as many scenarios as possible. They hope to

take it up next session. Four information sessions will be held. He added that Delegate Ware issued a letter concerning the need for public input and “transparency.”

- Mr. McEvoy encouraged everyone to read two economic reports available at www.uwg.vi.virginia.gov.
- Senator Ruff said the Mining Commission will meet June 18 at Chatham High School (next scheduled meeting).

Other Issues

Mr. McEvoy asked Senator Ruff to report on Inter Basin Transfer (IBT) legislation. Senator Ruff said last year Norfolk and the manufacturing community raised issues on IBT legislation. Fairfax County and a Rappahannock group also got involved. As a result, the legislation is not statewide, but narrow and will affect Roanoke River Basin. They think it will go a long way to match North Carolina’s process. Delegate Wright commended Senator Ruff on his work on this legislation.

Mr. McEvoy mentioned that the VRRBAC (and RRBBC) asked the General Assembly not to take action until after uranium mining studies were received and analyzed. To further VRRBAC’s review of the studies, Mr. McEvoy proposed the following meeting dates and review schedule:

- VRRBAC – May 23 – Middle Basin [in preparation for this meeting, all members were asked to read Chapters 1-4 of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) uranium mining study. They will have Chapters 5 and 6 presented.]
- RRBBC/VRRBAC – July 10 – NC - Virginia Beach (VB?) studies and the Moran study
- VRRBAC – Sept 12 – Upper Basin (NAS study, continued)
- VRRBAC/RRBBC – Nov 28 – Lower Basin in VA (make recommendations to VA General Assembly)

Speakers have not yet been lined up, but hope to get someone to speak to the studies. At the time we polled the group for meeting dates, we didn’t have the Mining Commission schedule, so this schedule may be revisited.

Mr. Feild asked Ms. Stephenson to send out a tentative agenda and homework assignment(s) to be prepared for upcoming meetings.

Mr. McEvoy encouraged everyone to download studies and review.

Mr. Hamlet will see if Charlotte Court House can host the May 23 meeting. The September meeting will be held somewhere around Smith Mountain Lake.

Other issues for future meetings include the following:

- Virginia’s Water Supply Planning program and the State Water Resources Plan
- Hydrilla and other invasive weeds

Mr. Lindenmuth said this has been a problem for some time, funding has been allocated to address the issue, some ongoing, some one-time appropriations. Mr. Feild added that it is a basin-wide issue that needs to be taken up by the state, and this committee should consider: grass carp, flies, and competing plants. Mr. Lindsey said that seeds are probably being

transported by geese and ducks. Delegate Poindexter said that concerning state funding, there should be a consolidated effort with DGIF, tourism, etc. to request this type of funding. Delegate Wright said they could propose a budget amendment. Mr. McEvoy added that it is not a glamorous topic, but it has significant impact on the lakes.

Mr. McEvoy asked for comments from the audience:

- Jim Thornton – Dominion invested in the Roanoke River Basin steam station on Kerr Lake (Mecklenburg County) which has an allocation. After the 2002 drought, Dominion recalculated and decided they needed to request/pay for additional allocation. The request has not yet been acted on. Dominion has been told they were waiting for Bi-State Commission. Jim asked if this group could keep this request in the forefront.
- Ann Cottrell – would this group consider having someone from out west to talk about tailings impoundments, regulations, what works, what doesn't, etc? So many unknowns...NRC? Mr. McEvoy said such a presentation would have to be at the Speaker's expense, as this group has no money. Ms. Cottrell added that, according to Dave McIntire, NRC is coming to southside in late spring. There will be an effort to coordinate this visit with a VRRBAC meeting, or at least will let VRRBAC members know when the visit is planned.

As there was no further business, meeting adjourned.