



Commonwealth of Virginia
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SUBJECT: Waterbar and Utility Access Road Advisory Committee Meeting #6, Meeting Minutes

Date: March 4, 2026

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held an advisory committee meeting on March 4, 2026, at 1:00 PM in the Winter Conference Room at the DEQ Piedmont Regional Office, located at 4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060. The purpose of the meeting was to help DEQ continue the process of reviewing and revising specifications for utility access roads to be included in a future revision to the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook (VSMH).

The following advisory committee members attended the meeting:

James Eric Clay, Dominion Energy, Inc	Brian Clauto, EQT
Cory Chalmers, EQT	Jared Webb, Appalachian Power

The following advisory committee members were not at the meeting:

Stacey Ellis, Dominion Energy	Kristin Mahoney, AEP
Josh Henry, Williams	

The following interested members of the public attended the meeting:

Jay Johnstone, C2 Environmental	Chris Schrinel, WSSI
Fernando Pasquel, Arcadis	

The following DEQ staff attended the meeting:

Kathleen (Kay) Alexander, Water Permitting Division	Melanie Davenport, Division of Cross-Media Programs
Chantz Ballard, Office of Stormwater Management	Jeanette Ruiz, Division of Policy
Margaret Culpepper, Office of Stormwater Management, NRO, Plan Review	

Welcome and Introductions

DEQ staff opened the meeting by welcoming participants and members of the public, having everyone in the room introduce themselves, and reviewing the requirements for public meetings under the state's Freedom of Information Act.

DEQ staff noted that the meeting agenda was shared with advisory committee members prior to the meeting and was posted to Town Hall on February 26, 2026. Staff added one additional topic for discussion and a copy of the updated agenda is included with the meeting materials.

DEQ staff noted that the previous advisory committee meeting for Waterbar and Utility Access Road was held on December 2, 2025. Staff asked committee members whether there were any corrections or comments to the draft meeting minutes from the previous meeting. No edits or comments were proposed. DEQ staff noted that the December 2, 2025 meeting minutes would be finalized.

Summary of advisory committee members' comments and proposed revisions on draft specification

3.0 Planning and Considerations

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed whether Section 3.c, "Potential BMPs necessary for project use and compatibility with current private road use," should be removed from the draft specification. DEQ staff noted that it should be kept because existing roads may need to be expanded or improved to support project activities and potentially require Construction BMPs.

4.0 Water Quality Performance Summary

(9VAC25-875-560)

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed the placement of references to impervious surfaces and managed turf within the draft specification. Committee members discussed moving the bullet points to the quantity section rather than the water quality section for consistency and clarity.
- Advisory committee members discussed the potential use of adjacent open space or working with property owners with utility easements to place open space covenants on additional lands as well as nutrient credits.
- Advisory committee members discussed including sheet flow breakers, waterbars, and right-of-way diversion practices within the specification. DEQ staff noted that this issue may be addressed through broader dips (BBD's) in road grade and that staff would review this topic further.

5.0 Design Criteria

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed the table for Design Criteria for Permanent Linear Utility Access Roads, including Road Grade, and whether the table should directly mention sheet flow and non-erosive velocities. Discussion indicated that this should be included but as part of the purpose.
- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed whether cross culverts should be included with plunge pools. During the discussion it was noted that this would be considered a point source discharge and would require supporting calculations to demonstrate that plunge pools disperse concentrated flow.
- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed using an open graded stone mix for the road. DEQ staff agreed to remove the statement requiring a cross section, noting that it was not needed.
- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed permanent right-of-way diversion. DEQ staff will check whether there is anything in construction specifications that would prevent permanent use.
- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed spacing of BBDs, with general agreement to keep the table as written consistent with Forestry specifications.
- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed outlet reinforcement, including the use of filter sock installed on the downslope of a BBD.

6.0 Construction Specifications

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed culverts versus ditches and the use of plunge pools. During the discussion, it was noted that dissipating velocity is not the same as dissipating flow. Committee members raised concern about culverts for natural drainage that a road crosses that may not be a stream but would still require a culvert to pass water underneath the road.
- DEQ staff noted that calculations and justifications demonstrating non-erosive sheet flow would be needed. Advisory committee members and DEQ staff agreed that a matrix with parameters and supporting calculations, for plunge pools as flow dissipating devices for utility access roads could be developed and would not require a maintenance agreement. Advisory committee members agreed to work on a matrix and submit it to DEQ within four to six weeks. DEQ staff noted if the proposed sizing matrix cannot be finalized prior

to v1.3 of the VSMH it can be finalized and included in subsequent revisions of the VSMH.

6.2 Permanent linear utility access road construction sequence

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed updates to the construction sequence. Step 1 would move to the temporary to permanent conversion sequence, and Step 3 would strike the second sentence.

6.4 Construction Inspection

- Advisory committee members discussed development of language for Step 6 regarding inspections and final sign off/certification needed. Advisory committee members will develop language and send it to DEQ. DEQ staff will send the language to the full VSMH Technical Review Committee (TRC) for review and comment.

6.5 Temporary construction road conversion to permanent linear utility access road

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed clarifying language added for areas of roadbed with compromised void space.

Discussion of timber mats for temporary construction road stabilization

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff discussed timber mats for temporary construction road stabilization. Advisory committee members noted that the topic will be revisited at a later meeting and that a solution will need to address all industries (utilities, fiberoptic companies, etc.). This topic will go in the Construction Road Stabilization specification (C-SCM-02).
- DEQ noted that the topic will then be provided to the entire TRC for review and comment.

Discussion of process to determine pre-existing roads

- Advisory committee members and DEQ staff reviewed the proposed process provided by a stakeholder for pre-existing roads. Advisory committee members discussed best practices currently being utilized.
- Advisory committee members noted that the discussion would help establish what is needed. DEQ staff noted that it will need to be determined where this language should be included and that it may need to be included in a separate specification or VSMH section.
- DEQ staff noted that this could begin in the linear specification development section, and the TRC will review.

ACTION ITEM: Advisory committee members will work on the matrix related to plunge pools and flow dissipating devices associated with Section 6.0 (Construction Specifications) and submit materials to DEQ within four to six weeks with an agreed upon tentative date of April 3, 2026.

ACTION ITEM: Advisory committee members will develop and provide proposed language for Step 6 in Section 6.4 (Construction Inspection) of the draft specification regarding verification inspections for the access road specification.

ACTION ITEM: DEQ staff will send the access road specification to the full TRC for review and comment.

ACTION ITEM: DEQ staff will review edits and comments discussed during the TRC meeting, make clarifications to the draft specification, and circulate it to the stakeholder advisory group.

Next Steps

- The next full TRC meeting will be in mid-April.
- DEQ does not anticipate another in person meeting of the access road Stakeholders Advisory Group.
- The final draft version of the access road specification will be distributed to the Stakeholders Advisory Group and is anticipated to be in VSMH v1.3.

Public Forum

No members of the public requested to speak.

Wrap Up

DEQ staff concluded the meeting at 4:15 pm.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
2026 Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook
Waterbar and Utility Access Road Advisory Committee Meeting #6

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Meeting Location:

Department of Environmental Quality Piedmont Regional Office

Winter Training Room

4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Start – 1:00 PM, Estimated End – 4:00pm

Welcome and Introduction	DEQ Staff
FOIA Reminder and Adoption of Meeting Minutes	DEQ Staff
Utility Access Roads	All, Facilitated by DEQ Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of draft specification• Discussion of Advisory Committee members comments and proposed revisions• Discussion of timber mats for temporary construction road stabilization• Discussion of process to establish pre-existing roads	
Public Forum	All
Next Steps	DEQ Staff
Wrap Up	DEQ Staff