Meeting start: 1:00 PM                      End: 2:50 PM
The spring VRUEC business meeting was held in the Patrick Henry Building, Richmond.

**VRUEC members & guests**

**Members present:** Rebecca Askew (Dept of Ag & Consumer Services), Greg Eaton (Claytor Nature Study Center), Suzie Gilley (DGIF), Andrew W. Larkin (NOAA B-WET), Candace Lutzow-Felling (State Arboretum of Virginia), Sarah McGuire (VA Institute of Marine Science), Bill Portlock (Chesapeake Bay Foundation), Ellen Powell (VA DOF), Michelle Prysby (Virginia Master Naturalists), Kathleen Register (Clean Virginia Waterways, Longwood University), Ann Regn (DEQ), Eric Rhoades (VDOE), Beth Sokolik (VA Soil & Water Conservation Service), Tim Taglauer (Shenandoah National Park), Tamra Willis (Mary Baldwin College), Sonya Wolen (Science Museum of Virginia), Barbara Young (VDOE), Carol Zokaites (VA DCR)

**Guests:** Anne Armstrong (Marine Science Consortium), Sheila Barnett (DEQ), Emily Beck (Green Adventure Project), Dan Cohen (Claytor Nature Study Center), Tamsey Ellis (Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District), Alix Fink, (Longwood University), Betty Gatewood (Mary Baldwin College), Page Hutchinson (DEQ), Robin Jensen (VA Museum of Natural History), David Ruble (DEQ), Mary-Stuart Tobeck (DEQ), Elaine Tholen (Fairfax County Public Schools)

**I. Reports & Organization Business**

1. **Introductory remarks & roll call (Barbara Young, Interim Chair)**

2. **Center for Excellence in Environmental Education (CE³) Longwood U. (Alix Fink)**
   Longwood U. is in the planning stage for an environmental center which will provide training for pre-service teachers, programs for students, and community outreach. Seeking collaborators. The name of the center is Hull Springs Farm, Center for Excellence in Environmental Education (CE³).

   This facility could serve as a model for a way to utilize facilities for a college and surrounding communities

3. **Review of Minutes, submitted by Candace Lutzow-Felling**
   Minutes for the December 7, 2011 meeting were reviewed and accepted as submitted.

4. **Treasurer’s Report, submitted by Ann Regn & Denny Casey**
   Income: $87,000               Expenditures: $66,900
   Balance carried forward:
   - 2012 Bay Academy: $60,000 (balance $5,000 from 2011)
   - MWEE $14,000
   - VRUEC Budget $94,000

   The Treasurer’s Report was reviewed and accepted as submitted.
$1,220,663 total funds have been raised since 1998 to support a diversity of VRUEC environmental education projects, including:

- Bay Academies Teacher Training
- Chesapeake Bay EE Capacity Grant
- Chesapeake Bay Leaders Summits
- DOE Wildlife Project
- Governors’ Advisory EE Forum
- Litter & Recycling Curricula & Training
- Love-A-Tree Teacher Lesson Kits
- MWEE Implementation
- VA Naturally Classroom Grants
- Virginia Naturally Grants & Flags
- VRUEC Administration

5. Nominations Committee Report (Suzie Gilley)
Nominees for the VRUEC Executive Committee:

- Chair: Barbara Young
- Vice Chair: Greg Eaton
- Secretary: Candace Lutzow-Felling
- Treasurer: Ann Regn (will serve as co-treasurer with Virginia Witmer)

No other nominees were presented from the floor.
All nominees were voted into office for a two year term, 2012-2014.

6. Virginia Naturally Report (Sheila Barnett)
Virginia Naturally is moving to DCR as it is a part of the Virginia Office of Environmental Education (VOEE).
Virginia Naturally is "the state's official environmental education initiative." It consists of several structural components;

1. State EE Board, the Virginia Environmental Education Commission (VEEC)
2. State EE Office, Virginia Office of Environmental Education (VOEE)
3. State-level EE centers or regional offices, the local EE networks
4. State EE interagency committee, Virginia Resource-Use Education Council (VRUEC) which serves as an advisory committee of Va Naturally, and
5. Va Naturally web site with a searchable database.

For report updates, please visit the VA Naturally web site:

7. ANNOUNCEMENT: Office of Environmental Education (EE) is moving to DCR, July 1, 2012 [see DEQ report for more info]
State coordination of EE will move to DCR.
Sheila Barnett will run VA Naturally, based in DCR.
Dave Ruble will run the EE Institute, based in DCR.
Both positions will be within the DCR Office of Public Communications.
Ann Regn’s position will change some but she will retain a DEQ agency EE role to include solid waste and watersheds. Ann will retain a seat on VRUEC.
Page Hutchinson will continue with Project WET and the Watershed Institute, based in DEQ.
These changes present an opportunity to build capacity & coordination among the DCR sub-agencies.
8. EE Conference Update (Dave Ruble)
The EE conference is scheduled for October 25-26, 2012 and will be hosted by Hungry Mother State Park, Marion which is in SW VA. The conference will have a full day and a half of activities. Attempts are being made to expand lodging and conference meeting space. Distance to travel is a concern for many people. Preconference (leadership day) is scheduled for Wed, Oct.24. The conference will be Thursday and Friday, including a half day of workshops & programs Friday morning (not just field trips as we have done for previous conferences). A block of cabins are being reserved; the average cabin has 2 bedrooms (each sleeps 3-5). Normally, 60-70 stay overnight and ~150 attend the conference. There is room for 45-68 to stay in the cabins. The conference theme is "Enhancing environmental education through heritage and biodiversity."

9. NOAA B-WET Update (Andrew Larkin)
This is the last year of NOAA B-WET funding for the Bay Academies. Funding for FY 2012 (Oct 1-Sept 30, 2012) permitted funding for continuing projects. Proposals submitted in 2011 will be funded in 2012 (3 grants in VA will be funded). NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office funded one new EE literacy project for this FY. FY 2013. Budget not finalized, yet. Funding still uncertain, but there is a 90% chance that a B-WET project RFP will be issued The Classroom Mini-grant Program will be funded by NOAA but will be administered through the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Thus, for future MWEE Mini-grants, apply and submit to C.B. Trust. Projects $5000 or less will be funded.

10. No Child Left Inside & ESEA (Bill Portlock)
Some portions of environmental education have been written into ESEA law but, there is no legislative movement right now as this is an election year. 2,200 members are now in the NCLI (No Child Left Inside) coalition.

11. Environmental Literacy Plan Update (Bill Portlock)
There are seven members on this committee. If anyone would like to see the language of the draft plan, contact Bill. The goal is to produce a white paper for state agencies to review. For states with an environmental literacy (EE) plan, there should be funds allocated through ESEA (if passed by congress).

12. Bay Academy Review (Barbara Young)
There are 92 registrants to date (few withdrawals this year). Two academies are over-capacity; these are Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). Registration numbers in the other Academies are:
- Mountains to the Bay: 15
- Rappahannock: 11
- Longwood: 2
- Charlottesville: 3 (July 16-23)
Registration through VDOE is open until June 2. Phone calls to individual registrants is important (as per Bill Portlock) as this helps to insure attendance.
10% of total enrollment for each Academy can be natural resource staff. Get this word out.
CBF has a MWEE program geared toward school administrators. This year, 30 school principals are signed up for the 3-day institute.
Principals also are welcome to attend the Bay Academies.
Get P-WET book orders to Page at least 3 weeks before your Academy begins.

13. Regional EE Team Reports
- **Central Virginia EE Alliance (CVEEA; Greg Eaton).** Conducted first Project WET workshop with 15 attendees. “Moving Field Guide” program for children is being developed by a professional dancer; kinetic learning about the environment.
- **Center for Rappahannock-Rapidan Environmental stewardship (CRRES; Stephanie DeNicola).** Team placed 3rd in Environthon. Have several rain barrels to sell. Strengthening networks; Ran a successful program for horses.
- **Three Rivers Environmental Educators (TREE; Charlotte Talcott).** Lisa Deaton is planning to talk about PLT to regional teachers because many teachers aren’t aware of this program. Will be asking teachers what TREE can do to help them. Had a couple of successful programs with schools (MWEE & outdoor EE)
- **Eastern Shore EE Council (ESEEC; Tamsey Ellis).** Watershed Walk is continuing to be a huge success. This year the theme will be Water Heroes. Folks will dress in “water heroes” costumes. Also building raised gardens that will be used to teach families how to raise their own food. Tamsey is retiring effective June 1. June 18th new person is expected to take over EE Council.
- **Charlottesville Regional EE Council (CREEC; Emily Beck).** Science and Civics workshop scheduled for June. Project WET workshop scheduled for June. Busy spring EE season expected.

14. Title IV Workshop. (Suzie Gilley)
There is a federal grant program for before and after school programs, 21st Century Learning Communities for out-of-school services provided at schools. A February meeting about the program was held in Roanoke; 8-9 state agencies attended the meeting. VRUEC and another state agencies are being encouraged to be used as resources for this program. Looking for programs that will get the students outside, especially STEM-related activities.
We need community, school, and school district partners with whom to write grants to provide programs for kids to provide enrichment for the after school programs. There are funds for staff, travel, and programs; program duration is 3 years. There is a need for discipline-based programs. Schools with high at-risk populations are favored. Grants are usually awarded jointly to a school and a state or non-profit agency; amounts up to $200K/year, per grant
Eric Rhoades & Barb Young will send a link to the Superintendent Memo link about this program.
15. VRUEC Member Reports

- **DCR, Carol Zokaites.** State parks are striving to work with schools; parks have places for people to come. Barb and Eric can send the names of school principals and science supervisors to VRUEC members who request them. It is important to get principals out to our facilities to see what we can offer. School Board members are important to have on your side, too (as per Eric Rhoades). Let your local school board know that you are one of their constituents. Invite them out to see what you do. PTA presidents are also good contacts; they can sponsor lunches for a teacher training, for example (comment by Suzie Gilley)

- **Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Beth Sokolik.** Project WET and Bay Academies are important to get teachers interested in EE; they are also important training opportunities for informal EE providers.

- **DEQ, Ann Regn.** VRUEC has $5000 remaining for collaborative meetings, workshops, and conferences between VAST Districts and EE teams. Focus can be STEM, EE literacy, MWEE. Either the VAST region or an informal agency can take the lead to organize an activity. Eric Rhodes & Barb Young will send contact names for VAST region coordinators.

II. Announcements

The next VRUEC meeting will be in January, 2013. Members will receive email notification of the next meeting place, time, and date.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Lutzow-Felling

VRUEC Secretary