



Resilience Coordination Working Group

Meeting Summary January 31, 2023

Meeting Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Information sharing: Purpose and Expectations of Working Group

- Matthew Wells, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Information sharing: Current State of Resilience in Virginia with Presentations by:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
- Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Small Group Discussion on the Following Topics:

- What are the most important topics this Working Group should discuss to improve coordination and maximize funding opportunities?
- What are the known gaps in current resilience coordination in Virginia?
- At the end of this process, what characteristics will a successful report and recommendations have?

Reports From the Small Group Discussion to the Working Group

Public Comment

Next Steps

Adjourn

Overview of Discussion

Consultants with the Performance Management Group (PMG) within the Virginia Commonwealth University L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs introduced the role of PMG as meeting facilitators and explained logistics for the Zoom-based conference call. Members of the Working Group introduced themselves during roll call.

Natural and Historic Resources Secretary Travis Voyles then expressed his appreciation for the Working Group and that the Governor was looking forward to seeing the report developed by the Working Group.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director Matthew Wells recapped the history of the Working Group as it evolved beginning with legislation in the 2022 General Assembly. He reiterated that the report developed by the Working Group will be provided to members of both the Virginia House and Senate Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources Committees in November. Director Wells described the four guiding principles related to resilience efforts:

- 1) The Administration is committed to addressing flooding and resilience challenges,
- 2) The Administration is committed to supporting all parts of Virginia impacted by these challenges,
- 3) Implement of related programs and plans needs to be part of coherent and cohesive effort, and
- 4) All activities should, as much is possible, be transparent and include public input.

Per Director Wells, the purpose of the Working Group, as detailed in the invitation to participate, is:

- To consider and assess strategies and policies for the Commonwealth to improve intergovernmental and interagency coordination; and
- To maximize the procurement of federal and private funding opportunities in planning for and implementing flood resilience throughout the Commonwealth.

He referenced the following excerpt from the invitation where “the Working Group will focus on improving the flood resilience of both human and natural systems and infrastructures. Additionally, recognizing Virginia's long-standing statutory and financial obligations to Chesapeake Bay restoration, Working Group recommendations will seek to prioritize strategies to protect and enhance the Commonwealth's water quality objectives, as well as natural systems.”

Director Wells noted the Working Group should focus on improved coordination across all of state government including identifying and maximizing opportunities with local and federal partners and leveraging funding opportunities.

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The meeting followed with presentations from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Links to these presentations are available on the DCR website.

The meeting attendees (both Working Group participants and members of the public) were then randomly assigned to one of five breakout rooms to discuss the following topics:

- What are the most important topics this Work Group should discuss to improve coordination and maximize funding opportunities?
- What are the known gaps in current resilience coordination in Virginia?

If time permitted, the breakout groups should identify the characteristics and recommendations included in a “successful” report by the Working Group.

Group 1 (as reported by Secretary Voyles)

The group discussed the following items:

- Focus has generally been on coastal issues but there is a need to consider issues being experienced every day in the General Assembly and within all the localities.
- While DCR has been effective in coordinating resiliency efforts, there may need to be some sort of dedicated coordinating entity/office/lead.
- There is a need to capitalize on resources of education institutions by supporting coordination between the educational institutions as well as between them and the localities.
- A need exists to better understand the impact of the Dillon Rule on the localities and how it drives decision making which potentially results in “piecemeal processes.”
- There is a need to find where there are gaps in the currently available data for all localities and look at possibly replicating the successes of data mining by the coastal areas across the Commonwealth.

Group 2 (as reported by Darryl Glover)

The following issues and opportunities were discussed in Group 2:

- There exists a need to clarify authoritative data sets that everyone in the Commonwealth can use for research and analysis
- A focus should be on identifying and coordinating public and private funding opportunities related to resilience. There should be a central repository with available information that details the purpose of the funds, who can apply, etc.
- A goal should be to clarify agency roles and responsibilities with respect to resilience.
- Use existing systems for localities to communicate their needs.

Group 3 (as reported by Dr. Jess Whitehead)

The following gaps were discussed in Group 3:

- There needs to be a focus on coordinating efforts at both the Secretariat level as well as at the staff level to ensure continuity.
- Agencies who are “new to the process” need to understand their role, e.g., funding, risk, etc.
- There needs to be a data framework that is flexible and adaptable and be timely.
- Need to identify which parties are not involved in this effort and work to engage them when possible, e.g., land use.
- Need to effectively engage low-income communities and not rely on solutions such as posting on a website.
- Need to address gaps in communication. It was noted having a special assistant to the Governor was considered effective but now the role is shared across agencies and with competing availability of time.

Group 3 discussed that a successful conclusion to the working group would be having an understanding of funding possibilities across all agencies and the private sector. Also, fully understanding “what is our capacity and what can be reasonably accomplished” related to resilience would be appropriate.

Group 4 (as reported by Speaker Pollard)

“Most important topics” discussed by Group 4 included:

- There is a need to recognize that differences in local expertise require different training and resources on resiliency needs and options as there is a lack of parity across the Commonwealth related to resources and capacity. One possible way to address this issue is with a “sister city” approach where localities can partner with areas that have expertise that would be of value.
- It was also discussed how it is important to track and leverage funding at the state level to better understand what is available and where it is going as it would serve as lessons learned for projects and increase accountability.
- The value of understanding antecedent causes for resiliency challenges (root cause analysis) to help inform how best to spend funds.
- The group discussed that it is important to engage with residents of floodplains, not just the localities especially related to environmental justice issues.
- Resiliency efforts should include businesses, industry, housing, and economic development stakeholders as their input is likely of significant value.
- Metrics need to be identified to measure the success of the resiliency efforts.

Group 5 (as reported by Matt Dalon)

Group 5 discussed the importance of the following:

- A dedicated and staffed Governor cabinet level position to help plan and coordinate this effort.
- The need to define roles and responsibilities and ways to share, document and institutionalize the information in order to “connect the dots” and measure the success.
- Establish a subject matter expert to focus on identifying grants and other funding opportunities and sharing appropriately.
- Look externally at how other states are handling resiliency efforts.
- Look internally to ensure that state agencies work wells with other agencies and localities and nongovernmental organizations.

After the group discussions, there was an opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received. It was then discussed that plans for future meetings would be shared via email and the meeting adjourned at noon.

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Working Group Members and Alternates in Attendance

Representative	Member Organization	January 31, 2023 Meeting Attendance	Alternate in Attendance
Andrews, Elizabeth	William and Mary	Yes	
Arnason, Charles A.	Soil and Water Conservation Board	Alternate	Dr. Stephen Hill
Baxter, Sharon	DEQ	Yes	
Brian Parker	VA State Treasurer	Yes	
Burhop, Kristin	Virginia Chamber of Commerce	No	
Clark, Andrew	Home Builders Association of Virginia	Alternate	Speaker Pollard
Copenhaver, Brad	Virginia Agribusiness Council	No	
Crumlish, Shawn	Virginia Resources Authority	Yes	
Curtis, Bill	DHCD	Yes (+Alternate)	Lee Hutchins
Deem, Angel	VDOT	Yes (+Alternate)	Chris Swanson
Denckla Cobb, Tanya	University of Virginia	No	
Ford, Jay	Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Yes	
Green, Jamie	VMRC	No	
Gwynn, Becky	Dept of Wildlife Resources	No	
Hawkins, David	Dept of Energy	Yes	
Jenkins, Angie	Virginia Economic Development Partnership	No	
Johnson, Abby	Virginia CPACE Authority	Yes	
Joyce, Rebecca	Central Shenandoah PDC	Yes	
Katchmark, Whitney	Hampton Roads PDC	Yes	
Kotula, Adrienne	Chesapeake Bay Commission	Yes	
Lawrence, Lewis	Middle Peninsula PDC	Alternate	Curt Smith
Lukenbach, Mark Dr.	VIMS	Yes	
Moore, Martha	Virginia Farm Bureau	No	
Pickett, Robert	VA Association of Soil and Water Districts	Yes (+Alternate)	Tyree, Kendall
Rovner, Nikki	The Nature Conservancy	Yes	
Sizemore, Aaron	Mount Rogers PDC	Yes	
Steinhilber, Emily	Environmental Defense Foundation	Yes	
Stewart, Jordan	Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs	No	
Stone, Chris	Clark Nexsen	No	
Stout, Wendy	Virginia Tech	Yes	
Talmadge, Shawn	VDEM	Yes (+Alternate)	Robbie Coates
Taylor, Sarah	City of Alexandria	No	
Travis Voyles	Sec of Natural and Historic Resources	Yes	
Vassey, Brett	Virginia Manufacturer's Association	Alternate	Paige Wernig
Vick, Cathie	Port of Virginia	Alternate	Patrick Kinsman
Wells, Matthew	DCR	Yes	
Whitehead, Jessica	Old Dominion University	Yes (+Alternate)	Carol Considine