

Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2008 3:46 PM

Subject: **Questions regarding the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee**

I was asked to respond to questions about VRRBAC posed by Katie Whitehead. My response is below.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer these questions about the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee. The questions and my response are listed below. If I can help you in any way please let me know.

**1. What is the current membership?** \* There are a few member issues that will be resolved after the General Assembly Session is over. Legislative members will be getting together after session to discuss these issues which include the status of Chairman Charles Poindexter who has been elected to the House, the appointment of a Senate member to replace Charles Hawkins, who did not run for re-election, and the appointment of a new Delegate member to replace Delegate Hurt, who has been elected to the Senate. There is also a PDC nominated citizen vacancy in the Roanoke/Alleghany PDC. To my knowledge NC has never appointed their members to VRRBAC. Current known members are:

Citizens:

Mike McEvoy; 1st Vice-Chair; Roanoke Valley Alleghany PDC  
Read Charlton; Commonwealth Regional Council PDC  
Walter Coles; At Large  
Robert H. Conner; Southside PDC  
John D. Feild; Southside PDC  
Haywood Hamlet; Commonwealth Regional Council PDC  
Evelyn Janney; New River PDC  
Bob Jean; Region 2000 PDC  
John Lindsey; At Large  
Tim Pace; West Piedmont PDC  
Mark Wagner; Region 2000 PDC

Ex Officio Members:

United States House of Representative Virgil H. Goode, Jr.; 5th District  
Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.; District 15  
Delegate Kathy J. Byron; 22nd District  
Delegate Onzlee Ware; 17th District  
Delegate Thomas C. Wright, Jr.; 61st District

**2. Are you on the Committee?** \* No. I serve as the DEQ staff assistant.

**3. Who made the appointments?\*** See legislation located at the link in item 4 for the appointment protocol. In short Senators are appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, Delegates are appointed by the Speaker of the House, Citizen Members from specific PDC's are appointed by the PDC's and approved by the legislative members, and 1 each at-large members are appointed by Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of the House. U.S. Representative Virgil Goode's office is designated by the legislation.

**\*When?\*** Original appointments were made in 2002 and vacancies filled after occurrence. The citizen at-large members were appointed in 2004.

**\*What notice was given of the openings?\*** I do not know the answer to this question but believe it would follow the protocol of the appointing authorities.

**\*When will new or additional appointments be made? \*** I understand new legislative members will be appointed after the current session ends. PDC recommended citizen appointments occur after the PDC makes recommendations and the legislative members of the committee approve the appointments.

**4. What is the stated task of the Committee? \*** The Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee (VRRBAC) was established in the executive branch of state government as an advisory committee to the Virginia delegation to the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission. The Committee assists the delegation in fulfilling its duties and carrying out the objectives of the Commission, pursuant to § 62.1-69.39. A link to the legislation establishing the group is here <<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+62.1-69.34> .

The Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission was established as a bi-state commission composed of members from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of North Carolina. The stated purpose of the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission is:

- a. Provide guidance, conduct joint meetings, and make recommendations to local, state and federal legislative and administrative bodies, and to others as it deems necessary and appropriate, regarding the use, stewardship, and enhancement of the Basin's water and other natural resources;**
- b. Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting the Basin's water quantity, water quality, and other natural resources;**
- c. Promote communication, coordination and education among stakeholders within the Basin;**
- d. Identify Basin-related problems and recommend appropriate solutions; and**
- e. Undertake studies and prepare, publish, and disseminate information through reports, and other communications, related to water quantity, water quality and other natural resources of the Basin.**

To my knowledge the NC Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee has never met so therefore neither has the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission. This delay in convening the Bi-State Commission handicaps the Advisory Committee.

**5. Can you or someone please articulate the relevance of the proposed study of uranium mining in Virginia to the work of this Committee? \*** I am the DEQ Staff Assistant for VRRBAC and not a member. Therefore I do not have the authority to speak for the Committee and do not set their business agenda. The Chair and members set their agenda. Often issues are raised during scheduled meetings. The members are aware of the mining proposal and the proposed legislation in the General Assembly but the Committee has not formulated a position. The purposes of the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission list water and other natural resources as a focus of that group so it would appear to be an issue that VRRBAC might consider. After the General Assembly session is over legislative members who have guided VRRBAC plan to discuss membership and direction for the Committee. This issue will likely be reviewed then.

**6. Whom does the Committee advise? \***The Virginia delegation to the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission. The Committee has passed resolutions which have been forwarded to pertinent legislators and groups. There are also annual reports to the Governor and the General Assembly.

**7. Who appoints the NC members?** \* This is at the discretion of the NC General Assembly. \*When?  
\*To my knowledge they have not been appointed.

**8. When does this Committee meet?** \* The recent schedule has been about 3-4 times a year. Technically it meets at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the voting members so request. At the last meeting the Committee tentatively proposed a meeting in April with the focus being water allocations from Kerr Reservoir and inter-basin transfer issues.

**9. What provision is there for public notification and participation?** \* I maintain an electronic mailing list of individuals and groups who have expressed an interest in meetings of the committee and send announcements directly to them. The meetings are also noticed on the Virginia Legislative Information System meeting page. Citizens who are knowledgeable are sought to serve on the sub-committees of the group. The sub-committees are Water, Lake Interests, Municipal Interests and Permit Holders, Rivers, and Agriculture and Forestry.

**10. Thank you for any clarification you can give and any suggestions you may have as to how your constituents can actively and constructively participate in all aspects of the process as debate about uranium mining continues.** \* I suggest that people learn everything they can about the pros and cons of the issue so that they can make a logical decision as the debate moves forward. If this is an issue that Virginia Roanoke River Basin citizens would like VRRBAC to consider please contact the Committee. I would recommend a letter addressing your position rather than numerous letters or emails. I would also encourage the group to be prepared to have a spokesperson address the Committee.

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