Minutes from Biannual Meeting on June 20, 2012

Attendees: Dave Fuss (Horry Co.), Leigh Wood (NI-WB NERR), Joe Fersner (Woolpert), Sue Sledz (Murrells Inlet 2020), Katherine Snyder (EPA Region IV), Amy Bennett (SC DHEC), John Adair (Surfside Beach), Tom Garigen (Horry Co.), Beth Thomas (NI-WB NERR), Christine Ellis (Waccamaw Riverkeeper), Daniel Newquist (Waccamaw COG), Jay Beeson (North Myrtle Beach), Ken Harbin (Surfside Beach), Katie Giacalone (Clemson Carolina Clear), Steve Moore (Myrtle Beach), Jim Wilkie (Murrells Inlet 2020), April Turner (SC Sea Grant), Tracy Jones (Georgetown Co.), Kevin Blayton (North Myrtle Beach), Ken Harth (Surfside Beach), Janet Wood (Myrtle Beach), Karen Fuss (CCU), Megan Brown (CCU), and Susan Libes (CCU)

Welcome and Introductions:
Karen Fuss welcomed everyone to the meeting. Tom Garigen made a motion to accept the December 8, 2011 minutes, and Jay Beeson and Beth Thomas seconded this motion. Minutes from the December biannual meeting were approved.

Karen then introduced the following attendees to give short program overviews:

Katie Snyder, EPA Region IV:
- Katie is the Watershed Coordinator for the state of South Carolina, a position previously held by Craig Hesterley. She has been in this position for seven months.
- Katie can help with watershed planning, water quality monitoring, grants (she is a technical officer), letters of support, and with partnering with federal agencies.
- Katie sends out grant opportunities as she finds them.
- Katie was asked about what the priorities for EPA grants are and how they should be worded. Katie stated that environmental justice for low-income areas is very important.
- Katie also noted that the EPA grants for Small Urban Watersheds will probably come out again next year.

Amy Bennett, SCDHEC BOW:
- Amy is the Pee Dee Watershed Manager which is a non-regulatory position with some outreach. Amy works part-time and is in the office from Monday through Thursday.
- Amy reminded everyone that MS4 permit annual reports are due. She also said that Matt Krofchick, SC DHEC Compliance, is in Afghanistan.
- Amy works with the TMDL/319 grants program. The RFP will be in July for watershed based plans. MS4s can apply as long as there is something in the W5 that makes them eligible for 319. Plans must be completed within a year.
- Amy also works with the water quality standards section and noted that there is a change from fecal coliform to e-coli.

Daniel Newquist, Waccamaw COG:
- Dan reminded everyone that DHEC approved the 208 plan.
• Dan asked everyone to please look at the website, www.wrcog.org, under environmental planning. He is looking for suggestions of links.
• Dan thanked everyone for help with the 208 planning process. If anyone wants a presentation on the plan please ask Dan.
• Dan offered letters of support for things that tie into the 208 plan.
• With the completion of the plan, Dan is transitioning to other activities. He is still happy to help with the LID manual and is also working with Murrells Inlet and their watershed plan.

Education Provider Updates:
Each Education Provider shared one slide and had five minutes to discuss their upcoming events.

Beth Thomas, NI-WB NERR Public Education
• Beth is the new President-Elect for the South Carolina Marine Educators Association (SCMEA).
• SCMEA is hosting a conference, Rice, Roe and Indigo, from October 5th - 7th in Georgetown.
• Wood Magic Forest Fair – Nov. 7th – 9th at Hobcaw Barony. Event with the SC Forest Commission. All 5th graders in Georgetown (600+) will learn about forest resources with a link to water quality and water conservation.
• Teacher Open House on August 16th – to introduce Estuaries 101 Middle School curriculum to Horry County and Georgetown teachers. Professional development hours will be available.

Leigh Wood, NI-WB NERR Coastal Training Program
• LID Manual – Leigh thanked those who wrote letters of support for the grant. This would cover the Engineers and Planners portion of the LID manual.
• NERR ACE Basin is working on section for property managers and HOAs to maintain infrastructure properly.
• Floodplain Management Short Course – came out of the Community Rating System. This is a one day course for local government officials/planners who will be taught the basics. New floodplain maps are coming out.

Sue Sledz, Murrells Inlet 2020
• The 2011 Shellfish report stated that Murrells Inlet is the most economically important area along the northern coast of South Carolina.
• In 2009-2010 the area lost 241 acres of shellfish beds (closed due to water quality standards).
• The volunteer water quality monitoring program has found chronic bacteria in several tidal creeks.
• The Murrells Inlet Watershed Management Plan is moving forward.

Christine Ellis, Waccamaw Riverkeeper
• Water quality monitoring continues with the Waccamaw Watershed Academy. The program is now working with the state to install water level gauges at several sites.
• The CCU campus portion of the water quality monitoring program is looking to include an IDDE element.
• Student groups in various basins have received funding to expand.

April Turner, Sea Grant
• Sea Grant is working with Clemson and NIWB-NERR to expand the utility for the entire coast in the Community Resource Inventory Tool for South Carolina. The expansions include expanded watershed basins, HUC 10 coastal watersheds, elevation contours, SLOSH model, soil information, and pervious surfaces. Other revisions including parcels and zoning are a work in progress.
• There will be outreach to promote this tool.
  Susan Libes, CCU Waccamaw Watershed Academy
• Susan stated that she has been getting feedback about the Long Bay Hypoxia Monitoring Consortium. The equipment at the piers is functioning. Susan showed a mockup of signage that will be placed at each of the piers which acknowledges the equipment and gives the monitoring website address.
• Susan also showed the www.ysieconet.com page and asked for suggestions on the “program overview” and “about us” portions of the site.
• Susan attended the National Water Quality Monitoring conference in Portland. She would like to start a state level initiative to develop a water quality monitoring council and suggested that an initial meeting could be held at the SC Water Resources Conference in Oct. in Columbia. This will become helpful as resources at DHEC decline and volunteers become more important. The SMS4s agreed that this would be a good idea to pursue.
• Water level logger going to be tried in Murrells Inlet.
• Susan noted that she just received an e-mail informing her that one of the sites in Surfside has become defunded.

Katie Giacalone, Clemson Carolina Clear
• Katie announced that Chris Ramaglia took a job with DHEC and she will send an e-mail to everyone about the transition process while his job is vacant.
• Katie noted that Carolina Clear continues the year building a “toolbox” of resources for commercial outreach including postcards and pilot posters.
• Chris worked on the FOG outreach program visiting restaurants and deciding on poster placement. A grad student was hired to create magnets and other items. Carolina Clear is now looking to produce the FOG materials more officially and may also include a PowerPoint and YouTube video.
• The auto repair shop material is designed but not produced. It has been tested in a few shops with an emphasis on dry clean-up methods.

Karen Fuss, CWSEC
• Many upcoming activities will be dependent on Year 8 Activity Plan.
• Karen and Megan are willing and interested in helping with LID demos/installations as far as the educational outreach component, e.g. workshops or drop-in, press releases. We can do the organization and logistics for the SMS4s. Please keep in mind when planning these types of activities in your communities.

SMS4 Roundtable Discussion Part 1:
• Kevin Blayton asked if there was a press release out for the pier monitoring. Susan will coordinate a press event and forward info to Public Info Officers. She has already gotten requests from news stations. Kevin and Steve Moore noted they think the website looks good.
• Ken Harbin stated that as a HOA member he feels that CWSEC should target HOA elected officials and HOA members, and not focus solely on property managers. There was a program for the Harbor Lights community and the reception was very good.
• Ken’s general observation of the programs is that citizens are given too much information and too many choices, e.g. 20 varieties of plants suggested for buffers.
• Ken would like to find a developer that would be willing to plant a buffer. It would be good marketing for the developer.
• Christine Ellis asked how people find out who the elected HOA members are. Ken Harbin said to ask the property managers.
Dave Fuss noted that Horry County Stormwater and CWSEC did two HOA workshops that were focused on a geographic area rather than just 1 HOA. There were enough people at these workshops to prove there is an interest.

Karen Fuss noted that each participant in these workshops got to take home a 3-ring binder full of pond management resources that can be used within the HOA and passed to next officers.

Tom Garigen said there are always complaints from residents about property owners not taking proper care of their yards, e.g. unmanicured buffer at edge of pond. Most of these problems really just require education about proper plant selection.

Ken Harbin noted that it is hard to find native plants locally.

Tom Garigen added that individual private nursery companies will order what you want. It’s really a market thing. Will create a demand.

Leigh Wood asked if we should have a card to handout with a list of these plants that people can take with them to nurseries.

Jay Beeson mentioned that these plants are listed on the Clemson website and people can ask Gary Forrester, Clemson Extension, about them.

Ken Harbin reiterated that there is too much information on the website and what is needed is a list of about 10 plants that work in the area.

Katie noted that Carolina Clear has an illustration of a shoreline that has a simple plant list with it.

Steve Moore stated that the NPDES Phase II permit rewrite is on hold. SCDHEC doesn’t know if they should wait for another year for the new EPA rulemaking. He asked the group if we should send a letter to SCDHEC to urge moving forward on new permit.

Joe Fersner added that this would be smart to move forward now. He spoke with Ann Clark who said that she is considering restarting the advisory board with new faces and an independent meeting facilitator and notetakers.

Dave Fuss stated that without professional facilitation and notetakers it will be a waste of time.

Tracy Jones stated that Ann and Jill agreed to SMS4 comments during advisory panel meetings and then Arturo rewrote the permit without looking at the agreed upon comments. Ann didn’t review.

Steve Moore added that maybe the group interpreted certain agreements differently.

Joe Fersner added that the new SCDHEC administration is watching more closely and maybe this will be better. Example – 303(d) list had a delay in submission to EPA because of internal review beyond the usual staff. There is a potential that they are going to rein Arturo in a bit.

Steve Moore stated that the other SMS4s in SCASM want to move forward too. Less restricted permit will arise if we don’t wait for EPA rulemaking. Just would like to see it get done.

Katie Giacalone asked who the letter would be written to?

Steve Moore said that it should be from the Consortium to Ann Clark

Karen Fuss stated that it should come from the MS4s and not the Consortium which includes educators who are not SMS4s and are not regulated.

Dave Fuss added that it might be more effective coming from the SCASM board.

Joe Fersner showed everyone the new Urbanized Area boundaries based on new population maps. These will come into effect with new permit.

Joe began a discussion on isolated wetlands. There is a task force formed that has six months to come up with recommendations for the legislature on defining isolated wetlands and whether or not they should be treated as federal wetlands. This task force is made up of environmentalists and developers.

Joe noted that this task force has come about because a single person sued the state over an isolated wetland. Eliminated with 3rd party lawsuit. 3rd party can call SC DHEC but not file their own lawsuit.
Leigh Wood noted that there is wetland delineation training available and if there is content members would like included to please let her know.

Steve Moore mentioned that MS4s are not qualified to determine what a wetland is.

OCRM general certification. Split permitting but with no min. threshold. Went out on public comment review. Stormwater permitting with Shannon Hicks and Ann Clark. Coastal zone certification goes through Curtis Joyner. Probably going to require that MS4s verify more about the permit requirements such as archaeological surveys and wetland delineations. MS4s have requested training on the latter.

Tom Garigen stated that they have trained in house on how to be aware of when to contact USACOE for a delineation.

Septic Projects:

April Turner started discussion

April explained that one of the main ideas to come out of the June septic meeting is that the MS4s need an inventory of the active septic systems.

Dave Fuss mentioned that the counties are concerned because there are a lot of rural areas that will never be connected to the sanitary sewer system. Dave noted that the county isn’t trained to inspect so they don’t.

Dave expressed interest in getting a stakeholder group together and to possibly apply for a mini-grant from Sea Grant to facilitate outreach materials and/or inventory work.

April said Sea Grant will assist in compiling data that exists, but the problem is the data that is not available.

Dave asked if the MS4s thought this sounded like a good idea.

Janet noted that she talked with the Grand Strand Sewer Authority and they said DHEC has all of the information.

Dave said that DHEC is strapped for funds and all of their files are in disarray.

Leigh asked if this septic work would qualify for an Urban Small Watershed Grant.

Katie Snyder said it would qualify and would be good coming from a group like this. She also noted that there is no definition for “urban” so we would just have to make an argument for this area.

Kevin Blayton noted there are septic tanks in North Myrtle Beach, but there are no digital records on them.

Dave brought up the fact that several “donut holes” exist in the county – areas where there are centers with no hook-ups.

Kevin Blayton said it is hard to hook-up non-city residents when they are in the county.

Jay Beeson commented that we need to do something about the septic problem in order to open up the shellfish beds.

Dave Fuss stated that the number one priority is to eliminate the pollution source. The pollution is from soils so poor that they don’t drain or from soils that are too well drained and allow pollutants to leach through.

Dave Fuss said maybe the answer is to get those who can be on the sewer line on it, and repair or replace systems of those who can’t.

Leigh Wood noted that the Urban Watershed Grant could set up a model database.

Dan Newquist mentioned that the 208 plan has a chapter on septic systems.

Tom Garigen asked Dan if he could act as a coordinator of a task force with the goal being to garner grants. Dan agreed.

Jay Beeson noted that Briarcliffe Acres needs to be involved.

Katie Snyder offered more advice to the group. The purpose of the Urban Small Watershed Grants is to reengage the community. Re-opening the shellfish beds would be a good link.
especially if the cities are partners. We should be focused on more than just an inventory but become multi-faceted and not too narrow.

**Good Housekeeping Inspection Forms:**
- Janet Wood noted that everyone will eventually have to fill out inspections forms for MCM6.
- Karen Fuss turned everyone’s attention to the sample inspection forms found on NCSU website.
- Janet and Karen noted that the Consortium could edit these forms and have them available to MS4s.
- Janet proposed that these forms would ensure consistency across the area and be submitted to SCDHEC.
- Steve Moore noted that it would be good to keep these forms the same across the region.
- Katie Giacalone suggested that we share these forms with SCDHEC to see if they use something like them.
- Kevin Blayton added that we could share the forms with SCDHEC, but not ask for their permission to use.
- Steve added that SCDHEC will see them when they audit the SMS4s.
- Consensus in the group was to put inspection forms on the Year 8 Activity plan.
- Tom Garigen stated that some of the language is vague and will need to be changed.
- Karen Fuss said we will modify the forms as needed from the Consortium’s suggestions. She will also ask NC State for approval to use the forms.

**Year 8 Activity Plan and Development:**
- Karen Fuss displayed the Year 7 Activity Plan on the screen. She led a review of each activity and asked if the Consortium wanted to continue it into Year 8 or delete it from the plan.
- Stormwater Pond Management website – Ben Powell continues to maintain this.
- Installations at Tara Hall – completed.
- Information Cards – these are developed and produced and need to be distributed.
- BMP Workshop for engineers – take off the list for now.
- Radio – too costly.
- Information in the Sun News – members would like to see native plants as a subject. Giveaways – continue distribution.
- Signage at Adopt-A-Landing sites – there is none yet, therefore keep it on the plan.
- Murrells Inlet Coloring Books – there are 50,000 available and distribution has just started.
- Good Housekeeping Videos – there are now 2 more available for check out from Karen.
- Crabtree Restoration Project – still in progress.
- SWIG – meetings are supposed to be 3rd Thursdays, but no one ever attends. Therefore, remove from list.
- FOG – still in the pilot phase. We need more feedback. Add to Year 8 but word as “Finalize Pilot”.
- Add installation of rain garden to be implemented, scripted and filmed.
- Look into added an LID opportunity in Murrells Inlet at the community building.

**SMS4 Roundtable Discussion Part 2 – new activities to add to Year 8 Plan:**
- Development of MI watershed management plan. Susan Libes, Sue Sledz, Dave Fuss, Tracy Jones and Dan Newquist will be working on this plan.
- Promote use of phosphorus-free fertilizers – CWSEC would develop campaign. Don’t “P” on my lawn. Fish door hanger. Need education on the 3 numbers (N, P, and K), and the middle number should be 0. Point of sale and landscapers.

- Approach school district to incorporate LID in new school design. Outdoor classroom idea. New library at Litchfield. Joe Burch is a key contact with school district. Go to Joe first. Just get a bid alternative to show costs. Take stormwater staff with us. Analyze who on the school board to talk to – only need 1 person. Horry Co. Keep America Beautiful committee has a school board member. Speak to KAB to get their support before going to school board.

- Engineer training – bring Hunter Freeman down to our area to go through EZ LID spreadsheet. LID Manual will help with this type of training, but is still two years away from being completed.

- Media – use billboards and TV. Radio could be used just for events. North Myrtle Beach has a radio station. Also can continue to use gardening column in the *Sun News*.

**Annual Report Format Feedback:**
- Karen asked the group if they liked the new layout of the Annual Report.
- Consensus among the group was that they liked the new layout.
- Karen reminded everyone that edits are due by Friday, June 22 at 5pm.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm. Minutes taken and submitted by Megan Brown.