

Regional Water Supply Planning Kickoff Meeting Big Sandy and Upper Tennessee Rivers 1

Big Stone Gap Visitors Center,
306 Wood Ave E,
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

3/5/2025
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Regional Planning Unit (RPU) Members Present	
Chad Monday, Town of Saint Paul, Primary	Jimmy Adkins, Lenowisco PDC, Primary
Chris Sexton, Town of Pennington Gap, Alternate	Michael W. Hatfield, P.E., Wise County, Primary
Cody A. McElroy, P.E., Wise County Public Service Authority, Primary	Mike Brindle, Lee County, Alternate
Earl Carter, Town of Saint Paul, Alternate	Mike Dishman, Scott County Public Service Authority, Primary
Gabriel Dillon, Town of Jonesville, Primary	Mike Dishman, Scott County, Primary
Gary Hampton, Town of Big Stone Gap, Primary	Stephen C. McElroy, P.E., City of Norton, Primary
J. Jeff Kilgore, Jr., Woodway Water Authority, Primary	Steve Rutherford, Town of Gate City, Primary

The following RPU members were absent from the meeting: Bobby Reynolds, Jr. (Wise County Public Service Authority, Alternate), Brian Markham (Town of Coeburn, Primary), Caleb Ramsey (Town of Wise, Primary), David Bailey (Bristol Virginia Utilities Authority, Alternate), Heather Ely (Dryden Water Authority, Alternate), J. H. Rivers (Wise County, Alternate), Jeffery A. Shupe (City of Norton, Alternate), Jimmy Brickey III (Town of Wise, Alternate), Jonathan Broskey (Scott County, Alternate), Keith Harless (Town of Pennington Gap, Primary), Kenneth Scott Mullins (Town of Gate City, Alternate), Mark Quillin (Town of Appalachia, Primary), Mark Quillin (Town of Jonesville, Alternate), Mike Clifton (Town of Appalachia, Alternate), Penney Capps (Town of Weber City, Primary), Rhonda Neeley (Town of Weber City, Alternate), Rob Wright (Lee County, Primary), Ron Bailey (Dryden Water Authority, Primary), Stephen Lawson (Town of Big Stone Gap, Alternate), Tracy Garrison (Town of Coeburn, Alternate), Tracy Puckett (Lee County Public Service Authority, Primary), & Will Witcher (Bristol Virginia Utilities Authority, Primary).

VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Staff Present	
Kati McCall (Burton)	Gouri Mahadwar

Members of the Public	
Jacob Harris, Lee County PSA	Jimmy Williams, Town of Coeburn

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introductions:

Kati McCall (DEQ) convened the meeting at approximately 10:08 AM. She welcomed members to the Regional Water Supply Planning Kickoff Meeting for the Big Sandy and Upper Tennessee Rivers 1 Regional Planning Area.

Presentation Summary: A summary of presentation topics is included below. A generic copy of the presentation is available on the [DEQ Water Supply Planning Meetings webpage](#).

- 1) **Program Background:** [The Water Supply Planning program](#) was created after the 2001-2002 drought. Its goal is to ensure adequate and safe drinking water is available to all Virginians, while encouraging, promoting, and protecting aquatic life, recreation, and other beneficial uses.
- 2) **Water Supply Planning History:** The original Local & Regional Water Supply Planning Regulation (9VAC25-780) was made effective in 2005, followed by the submission of 48 local and regional water supply plans by local governments in Virginia. The final compliance date of these original plans was 2013. The water supply planning process is a long-term collaborative effort involving a variety of state and local stakeholders.
- 3) **Amendments to Regulation:** The [amended WSP Regulation](#) was made effective on October 9, 2024, and required water supply plans be developed regionally (HB452), with increased encouragement of stakeholder involvement, and an added look at risks relevant to each region's water supply. Amendments also allowed for a local government to request to be reassigned to a neighboring regional planning area.
- 4) **Navigating the Regulation:** To utilize the [WSP Regulation](#) in development of a regional water supply plan consider the following highlights: Section 50 includes a listing of all submission requirements for a regional water supply plan; Section 55 is a new section describing required public participation; Section 90 requires description of existing water resources information; Sections 70, 80, and 100 include data accounting and analysis on water sources, uses, and projected demands; Section 125 is a new section requiring identification of water supply risks and proposed strategies to address risks.
- 5) **Roles and Responsibilities:** To aid in regional plan development, DEQ has clarified intended roles for Regional Planning Units (RPUs), local governments, Planning District Commissions (where relevant), and DEQ staff. The roles and responsibilities table can be found at the end of the presentation on our webpage. Roles will be further clarified in the associated Guidance document that will be available once approved.
- 6) **Resources:**
 - a) [DEQ Water Supply Planning Resources webpage](#) – This webpage includes a series of resources associated with each section of the regulation as well as an updated Regional Planning Area map and a list of all Regional Planning Unit representatives.
 - b) [DEQ Water Supply Planning Meetings webpage](#) – This webpage is the landing page for regional water supply planning kickoff meetings. It includes a copy of the kickoff meeting presentation as well as a list of all Regional Planning Unit representatives.
 - c) **Guidance document** – The Guidance document is currently under review and will be posted on Virginia Town Hall for a formal public comment period as soon as possible.

Updates will be provided on DEQ's webpage and communicated directly to Regional Planning Unit representatives.

- d) **70-80-100 Excel Workbook** – This Excel workbook will be provided to Regional Planning Unit representatives in June of 2025 (estimated). The workbook will be partially pre-populated with 2024 data to be reviewed, updated, and submitted by Regional Planning Unit representatives alongside regional water supply plans by the October 9, 2029 deadline.
- e) **Local & Regional Water Supply Planning Summaries** – This resource is under development, planned for Summer 2025 delivery to Regional Planning Unit representatives, and will include figures and tables to assist in regional plan development.
- f) **Funding for Regional Plan Development** – The Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$462,000 in grant funds to be allocated over two years for eligible activities proposed by the 26 Regional Planning Units designated by 9VAC25-780-45. Out of the amount appropriated, \$231,000 is available for FY2025 and \$231,000 is available for FY2026. Applications for FY2025 have closed and contracts have been sent to grantees. FY2026 funding applications are expected to be available in the Fall of 2025. Updates will be provided on DEQ's webpage and communicated directly to Regional Planning Unit representatives.

Questions:

DEQ staff fielded a series of questions on topics including regulatory requirements and deadlines, roles and responsibilities, DEQ resources, and funding. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is under development and will be posted on the [Water Supply Planning Resources webpage](#) when finalized.

Adjournment:

Kati McCall (DEQ) thanked all of the members of the RPU and the interested public and closed the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:25 AM.

For questions regarding this meeting, please contact Kati McCall, the Water Supply Planner serving this region, kati.b.mccall@deq.virginia.gov.