A-NPDC
ACCOMACK-NORTHAMPTON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
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1. **Call to Order**
   Chairman Leatherbury called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. **Public Participation**
   Andy Keeling, of Indian Trail, made a request to move the agenda item for Public Comment to the end after New Business to allow for comment on current meetings agenda items. It was noted a change to the Agenda would require the by-laws of the committee to be changed.

   Jill Wilt, of Accomack County, commented that the water hydrants at CVS in Onley have been gushing water for over one month. The accumulation of water is growing algae on the surface creating a safety issue. CVS was contacted by Ms. Wilt and she has received no response back. The Town of Onley has also requested remediation with no response. Ms. Wilt requests the GWC consider further action.

   Ken Dufty commented that a member of the GWC said the proposal made by Vaulted Deep was supported by the GWC. The GWC did not support the Vaulted Deep proposal. Mr. Dufty also stated comments will be submitted for the Northampton County Rezoning proposal.

4. **Minutes of the May 19, 2026 Meeting & Committee Attendance**
   Approval of the minutes for the May 19, 2026 Meeting and the Committee Attendance Record were requested.

   Member Mastyl requested some minor typo corrections to be made in the May 19, 2026 minutes. Member Grossman requested a correction in the attendance record, a member was listed as present and absent.

   Member Grossman moved to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2026 meeting with corrections and the Committee Attendance Record. It was seconded by Member Washington, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

5. **Financial Status Report**
   The May Financial Statement was presented. Member Grossman moved to accept the May Financial Statement as presented. This was seconded by Member Mastyl, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

6. **June Staff Report**

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**Old Business:**

Project Identification for FY26

The working session for identification of potential projects for the coming year will be done at the June meeting.

Subsidence Monitoring

The GWC has received a report from USGS regarding the subsidence monitoring. The report is available.

Groundwater Award / Newspaper

The photo of Paul Muhly's family accepting the annual Groundwater Award was in the June 12, 2026 edition of the Eastern Shore Post.

Informational Item

Ben Sagara of Department of Wildlife Resources spoke about a project they are working on to restore wetlands on 8,000 acres. The work will involve removing pines and plugging ditches for improved habitat. The retention of water this will allow will be good for the aquifers. Funding has been received by DWR to hire people to work on the project. Mr. Sagara offered to make a presentation to the Groundwater Committee at the September 2026 meeting.

Intern

Staff will be meeting with Barbara from the University of Virginia regarding the recommendations of students. They also contacted Eastern Shore Community College. A-NPDC will then meet with the candidates and decide who is interested and the best fit for the work.

The scope of work includes the scanning of 10 years of manual records from the Virginia Department of Health and converting them to digitalized records. We also need to set up a protocol for storing the information and files. Permission from the Virginia Department of Health would need to be granted for the intern to go to their facility to do the work.

Jason Pope gave an update regarding the scanning of documents. Last week Mr. Pope from USGS, and DEQ, met with the Virginia Department of Health and the Household Water Quality Program at Virginia Tech. They discussed the data sharing of the information so it could be useful to all concerned. They recently have found out the following information.

The Eastern Shore Health District office does not collect any paper reports regarding well completion for private wells. For the last decade or so they have been electronically entered in a DEQ database by the well drillers. Virginia Department of Health staff obtains this information from DEQ.

There are many records on file at the VDH office. There are already plans in place for VDH with the help of a contractor to scan all paper records from all district office files. The Eastern Shore office reports this could happen really soon, possibly within a week or two. The digitization process would not only be a visual scan of the record but the data would be available as a PDF.

Jason Pope said this would change the scope of work. He did not know the exact timeframe but the work that is proposed here is going to be done and paid for by VDH. The data would be available to other agencies and other university researchers.

Jason Pope also heard Ashley Thorne, from the Eastern Shore Health District, say the scanning process could happen within a week or two. She understood when the records were scanned they would be taken from the local health department and file them at headquarters.

Once the data is available Mr. Pope said there are a number of things that needed to be done such as correctly locating those wells from the data, looking at well depth in relation to hydrogeologic framework, the aquifer elevations, and connecting to the household water quality results.

VDH, DEQ, and USGS agreed this was a very useful project. However, no one has the capacity to do this work without additional funding. The greatest potential for work would be for the University researchers in cooperation with the DEQ and USGS to assist in getting it done. DEQ and USGS could provide information and guidance.

Member Grossman made a motion to postpone the matter of proceeding with the intern until the next meeting when more information was available. It was seconded by Member Washington. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Groundwater Dashboard

Member Spuck stated this Dashboard will provide a clear, defensible snapshot of groundwater quality, availability, usage, and long term sustainability to guide policy and inform residents. The purpose of this dashboard was to compile complicated data in an easy to understand, clear, and simple format, to educate the public on different topics of concern, and to keep the information updated.

For example he overheard a resident saying the aquifer was not healthy enough to add any additional developments. If we had this dashboard we could have answered the questions such as the quality of the water, the quantity of the water, and the ability for management of growth.

**New Business:**

USGS Model Update

Jason Pope, from USGS, has provided an update on the completion of the new groundwater model. It is currently expected to be completed at the end of this year. A USGS report will then be generated. In discussions with DEQ, they expect it will take an additional year to implement it as a regulatory tool.

Groundwater Dashboard

Matt Spuck stated with increasing issues regarding development on the Shore the following qualities such as transparency, clarity, accountability, and meaningfulness are very important when relaying information to the public. He suggested using a Groundwater Dashboard. The purpose of this dashboard was to compile complicated data in an easy to understand, clear, and simple format, to educate the public on different topics of concern, and to keep the information updated. This would benefit from accessing information on the website without having to dive into the heart of the website.

For example he overheard a resident saying the aquifer was not healthy enough to add any additional developments. If we had this dashboard we could have answered three questions such as the quality of the water, the quantity of the water, and the ability for management of growth. This information could possibly give the person asking the question a different view after reading the data.

Website

A consultant has been hired and has obtained access to the website. They will start going into the website and reviewing the information.

7. **Groundwater Consultant Report**

GWC McMillan stated there were no draft permits currently submitted for public comment at this time.

DEQ monitors drought conditions through the Drought Monitoring Task Force (DMTF). This taskforce was established in 2002. They monitor drought conditions as established in the Virginia Drought Assessment & Response Plan. They monitor droughts through the following indicators:

- Precipitation Deficits
- Stream flows

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- Groundwater levels
- Reservoir Storage

The four drought levels are categorized as either normal, watch, warning, and emergency. GWC McMillan will alert us each month the current level for the Eastern Shore of VA.

The entire Eastern Shore is under a drought warning. All of Virginia, except Southeastern VA, is in a drought warning. Southeastern VA is on a drought watch. As of June 9, 2026, they have updated the Drought Monitoring Report with the following specific notes:

- Several areas within Virginia have implemented mandatory conservation measures (not on the Shore)
- Aqua Virginia has implemented voluntary conservation measures for their systems including in Accomack County
- Virginia American Water is conducting water conservation public outreach for the Town of Cape Charles

The U.S. Drought Monitor Report for Virginia shows, based on precipitation, all of Accomack County and part of Northampton County is in extreme drought. The southern portion of Northampton County is in severe drought.

GWC McMillan reviewed the 2026 Priority Matrix and the descriptions. It is divided as follows:

**Institutional Mechanisms**

1. County Comprehensive Plans
2. Update Ordinances

**Eastern Shore Research Needs**

→ Hydraulic Characteristics

3. Paleochannels
4. Freshwater - Saltwater Transition
5. Aquifer & Confining Unit Hydraulic Characteristics

→ Water Quality

6. Agricultural Nutrients (Nitrogen)
7. On-Site Systems
8. Emerging Contaminants

→ Other

9. Deep Aquifers
10. Climate Change

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11. Sea Level Rise

**Monitoring**

→ Hydraulic Characteristics

12. Water Use
13. Groundwater Levels

→ Water Quality

14. Limited, Most Information old.

**Alternate Source Development**

15. Surficial (Columbia) Aquifer
16. Brackish Water / Saltwater Treatment (membrane & ultrafiltration)
17. Reuse
18. Enhanced Recharge & Aquifer Storage and Recovery

Each one of the items were ranked as follows:

- Implementation status
- Implementability
- Short Term Effectiveness
- Long Term Effectiveness
- Implementation Cost

There were also columns to add pertinent information to each item such as:

→ A brief summary of the item
→ Remarks
→ Groundwater Committee Support (from tracking, indirect support, direct support & funding)
→ Priority
  ➢ **0** Easily implemented, can be completed as part of normal Committee work
  ➢ **1** Higher priority, requires additional resources based on need, implementability, cost
  ➢ **2** Secondary, principally based on lower priority or higher cost
  ➢ **3** Tertiary, principally based on lower priority, implementation complexity, higher cost

The 2026 Priority Matrix contained some items which the priority was identified as 1. They are listed as follows:

- **Freshwater-Saltwater Transition:** The potential for saltwater intrusion continues to be one of the more important sustainability concerns with the confined Yorktown-Eastover aquifer system. This is not as well understood as groundwater level changes.
- **Sea Level Rise:** Along with climate change, this is a factor that impacts the freshwater-saltwater transition. While this is a long term concern and not short term, monitoring over an extended period is necessary to quantify sea level rise.

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- **Water Use**: The principle uncertainty is quantifying the use that is not reported to DEQ, consisting of a large number of small withdrawals (less than 300,00 gal/month)
- **Water Quality**: Water Quality is not well quantified and is commonly assumed to be "poor" quality. A better understanding of the quality of the surficial aquifer is important to increase use of this more sustainable water source. Note, the category for "agricultural nutrients - nitrogen is included with the surficial aquifer water quality.

**8. Attachments**

**9. Other Matters**

There were no other matters at this time.

**10. Scheduled Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting for the Groundwater Committee will be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce's Boardroom in Melfa, Virginia.

**11. Adjournment**

Member Grossman made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Member Hershey, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

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L. Dixon Leatherbury, Chairman

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Elaine K. N. Meil, Secretary/Treasurer