

# VAPSS NEWSLETTER

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VAPSS was founded in 1978

August 2016

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## SAVE THE DATE for the Fall VAPSS Meeting

### Topic: Soils and Geology of the Ridge and Valley

Field trip to the family farm of Stephen White      **October 27-28, 2016**  
Additional details will be out soon      **Camping available**

Meeting location: Holiday Inn Winchester Historic Gateway,  
333 Front Royal Pike, Winchester VA 22602

Volunteers may contact Morgan Kash [morgankash@gmail.com](mailto:morgankash@gmail.com) (703) 609-3274

VAPSS Fall Board Meeting, October 27, 2016, after the educational programs

#### Student Scholarship available

**\$500**

From VAPSS ...see page 3

### HB558 Survey **DUE 25 August 2016**

By Jeff Walker

Our representative on the Sewage Handling and Disposal Advisory Committee (SHADAC) for the VA Department of Health (VDH), has been asked to share a survey questionnaire based on a discussion held at the 8/3/16 meeting of SHADAC regarding the evaluation and design costs for onsite soil evaluators (OSE) and Professional Engineers (P.E.).

**If you wish to complete the survey and provide services for septic and well design, permit, inspection and construction oversight, please click the link below to complete the questionnaire.**

Link to questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2FCYZNF>

continued

**VAPSS Mission:** *To recognize soils as a non-renewable natural resource and the practice of soil science as an interpretive science; to ensure a class of professionals exists that can properly utilize the large investment the Commonwealth of Virginia has made in the Soil Survey and to ensure the practice of soil science and evaluation meets established minimum standards of education, experience, ethical conduct and professional responsibility and to prevent abuses in the practice of soil science by untrained or unprincipled individuals.*

# VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS

VAPSS News:

By VAPSS President Morgan Kash

This has been a busy year for VAPSS. We have added four new board members (Lexi, Bob, Austin, Morgan) hired a lobbyist, appointed Bill Sledjeski to the SHADAC committee and plans have been made for an exciting fall conference in Winchester. Our new secretary is Alexi Jones who also serves on the technical committee with Bill Sledjeski. Lexi brings a lot of experience as a past president of VAPSS and working towards obtaining licensure for soil scientists. She works closely with our lobbyist Lauren Schmitt in Richmond. The hot topic for Sewage Handling and Disposal Advisory Committee (SHADAC) is HB 558 which will be one of the issues discussed at our fall meeting in Winchester. The wheels of progress move slow in Richmond but we must keep in mind they do move!

Bob Melby has also returned to the board. He has been instrumental in helping set up our fall conference. Austin Gardner is one of our younger VAPSS members and his focus has been to help recruit new members.

The VAPSS fall meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Winchester on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of October. Registration materials will be sent out in the next few weeks. We will have one day of speakers at the hotel followed by a field trip to the family farm of Stephen White. Camping is available at the farm. Our theme for the fall meeting is the Soils and Geology of the Ridge and Valley. On Thursday immediately following our last speaker we will have a short VAPSS business meeting. A VAPSS member has offered to provide light snacks and drinks to those that attend the meeting. So please come and consider putting your name in as president elect or another board position.

In closing, an organization is only as strong as its members. If you have stepped up to help, thank you! If you have not had the opportunity to serve, consider volunteering in some capacity. Let's continue to make VAPSS strong by showing our commitment through our actions.

## Soil Judging Team plans out Fall Semester 2016

The Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team is planning several activities this fall. The first meeting will take place Friday, Aug. 26th. Officers will be elected for the Soil Judging Club. The team will hold about six practices, then attend the Southeast Regional Contest October 2nd-6th in Auburn, AL. The team intends to attend the VAPSS fall conference in Winchester and help prepare the pits. The team would also like to volunteer to help the USFS do some soil sampling in October. A hike to McAfee's Knob is on tap, along with fundraising of picking, washing, and delivering pumpkins to the Tech Bookstore to sell. A few service projects will be done to deliver produce to local food providers.

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# VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS

## Practice of Engineering Update

By Jeff T. Walker, LPSS AOSE

DPOR has been challenged over changes to interpretation of the ability of Onsite Soil Evaluators to certify wastewater characterizations through guidelines published June 30th. These changes alter the guidance document titled [Onsite Sewage Systems Designed by PE's and Onsite Soil Evaluators](#). The engineering board was asked to alter interpretation of design authority following complaint over OSE certification of a design serving a residential child care facility. The ongoing controversy affects characterization and certification for wastewaters originating from dwellings or accessory structures. By extension this would limit OSE to design of Dwellings under Table 5.1 of the Sewage Handling Regulations.

Activists have addressed the APELS Board, contrasting these changes with statutory language, and questioned whether that board has authority over OSE. The leading question suggests design authority should be housed under one board, rather than remain divided between two.

OSE are accepted to be practicing engineering under exemption to the engineering license. There has been a failure to recognize design of wastewater systems falls under the practice of engineering, and as a licensed body we are not exempt from accepted standards of practice.

VDH has claimed design of "traditional systems" is exempt from the practice of engineering; however we should consider the following statement provided August 17<sup>th</sup> by the Executive Director of the Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals, Ms. Henshaw wrote:

The guidance document pertains to Chapter 4 of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia, which is the APELSCIDLA Board's statute. Section 54.1-402.A.11 provides the exemption from PE licensure for onsite soil evaluators in specific circumstances. *As has been often noted, onsite soil evaluators are engaging in an area of the practice of engineering that is only permissible because of the exemption from PE licensure. (Emphasis added)*

## HB558 Survey

Our representative on the Sewage Handling and Disposal Advisory Committee (SHADAC) for the VA Department of Health (VDH), has been asked to share a survey questionnaire based on a discussion held at the 8/3/16 meeting of SHADAC regarding the evaluation and design costs for onsite soil evaluators (OSE) and Professional Engineers (P.E.).

**If you wish to complete the survey and provide services for septic and well design, permit, inspection and construction oversight, please click the link below to complete the questionnaire.**

Link to questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2FCYZNF>

The questionnaire will be open until August 25, 2016. At that time, VDH will close the questionnaire for analysis and inclusion in the draft HB 558 report.



# VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS

From Soil Science Society of America to VAPSS

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/webform/white-house-soil-workshop>

## A Call to Action to Save One of America's Most Important Natural Resources

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On Monday, August 1, OSTP announced a nationwide call to action to address soil degradation and erosion across the United States. OSTP also announced that The White House had formed a new Working Group on soil under the National Science and Technology Council, which will seek technical input from 15 Federal departments and agencies, and work toward Federal actions to protect soil resources.

OSTP seeks innovative actions from Federal agencies, academic scientists and engineers, farmers, entrepreneurs, businesses, advocates, and members of the public to participate in a nationwide effort to impede soil loss, enhance soil genesis, and restore degraded soils.

Tell us what you are doing to respond to this important call to action. If chosen, your response may be included in material, similar to the fact sheet for the 2015 White House Science Fair, released later this year.

**Instructions:** Response to these questions is voluntary. Respondents need not reply to all questions listed. The White House may post responses to these questions without change, online. The White House therefore requests that no business proprietary information, copyrighted information, or personally identifiable information be submitted. Please note that the U.S. Government will not pay for response preparation, or for the use of any information contained in the response. This is what the survey will ask:

### A. Contact Information

Primary Contact Name

Organization

Title

Email

Country

State

### B. Announcement Summary

What **new** (i.e., not yet public) activities or actions is your organization undertaking to respond to the Call to Action to prevent soil loss, enhance soil genesis, or restore degraded soil? Provide quantifiable details to indicate the scope, impact, and timeline of the new activities and actions, e.g., value of resources

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committed, number of individuals reached, geographic extent, sectors impacted, etc. Responses should be limited to 4 sentences.



## C. Categories

If applicable, please indicate which of the key themes below your organization's actions will support. You may select more than one option.

- Deployment of low-cost sensors and soil monitoring technology, remote sensing for soil characteristic and land-use mapping, or soil data open access.
- Interdisciplinary and FEWS (food, energy, and water systems) research related to soil.
- Soil data portals and usability.
- Educating and engaging the American public.
- Generating healthy soil, increasing soil carbon, and/or reducing pressure on erodible agricultural soil.
- Other...

And then the survey will ask you to submit this response.

\*\*\*\*\*///// Please feel free to enter as many organizations as you can think of that you have touched with your knowledge of soils. Remember, Soils are so important that all agencies have to account for it. And the Federal Energy Regulation Commission requires projects to have Resource Report 6 Geology and Resource Report 7 Soils on major utility applications.

Soil-Ecosystem Functions increase with an increase in undisturbed soil. Stormwater may not be a problem until the area left undisturbed to soak it up is paved or compacted. Large areas of undisturbed soils are necessary for life and to clean water. Cutting a landform changes the soil water hydrologic flow and soil water vapor pressure. Right of Ways are hot and the soils dry, typically, because trees are kept from growing and herbaceous and shrub plants do not provide much shade.

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**Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists**  
**Nan Gray, Editor of this newsletter but maybe not the next....**  
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**P.O. Box 3 Newport, VA 24128**  
**Phone: (540) 544-779**

Remember to call Miss Utilities (811 or 800-552-7001) before you dig and get a ticket number to protect you and everyone on the project. Safety first.

Stolen and embellished for VAPSS: Help us keep you connected! It's that time of year when we ask you to verify that the information we have for you is up-to-date...

Never miss another issue of *the VAPSS Newsletter*, ensure you receive important VAPSS emails, share your areas of expertise, and determine what contact information other members and the Public are able to view, join the VAPSS Directory.

Here's what you'll find:

Contact Info - Update your name, title, company/organization, phone numbers, addresses and job functions

- About Me - Update your demographic information and manage your education/degree history
- Contact Preferences - Tell us how you wish to be contacted and what communications you wish to receive
- Privacy and Profile Settings - Determine what information is public and upload a photo of yourself for inclusion in your profile
- Newly Enhanced Scientific Expertise Directory- Manage your self-identified areas of expertise in this valuable resource for our profession. Features include new categories as well as an enhanced contact information and overview section.

We encourage you to take a moment to support VAPSS, so that VAPSS can in turn help support you.

## 2016 ADVERTISING AND ARTICLE DEADLINES

SPRING 2016 (March) due February 15

FALL 2016 (September) due August 15

SUMMER 2016 (June) due May 15

WINTER 2016(December) due November 15

-Newsletter ads 4"x4" \$20 for Members, \$100 for non-members

**Save the date!**     **VAPSS Annual Fall Meeting- October 27 & 28, 2016**

**VAPSS Fall Board Meeting – October 27, after educational programs**