



VAPSS Newsletter

Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists

Volume 29, Issue 1

From the Editor

I heard someone once say “I don’t want to be a soil scientist-I just want to be a soil consultant”. Now this was in the “pre-sunset days” of VDH’s On-Site Soil Evaluator program when there was a need for some definition that allowed non-CPSS’s to do soils work.

I was sympathetic to his plight because although this person did not hold a degree in soil science, he did have a wealth of knowledge, from book learning, OJT, and practical experience that made him, in my opinion, a soil scientist. He had been practicing as one (although he always referred to himself as a soil consultant) for many years.

His statement has hounded me at various times through-

out the past years. Why did he not want to be a soil scientist? Did he not feel qualified? Was he afraid he wouldn’t or couldn’t pass the CPSS test?

It also made me wonder how a person could consider himself a professional “consultant” in a field where professional certification is available but not pursued by the individual. Who hires consultants in professions where the professionals aren’t certified, licensed, or otherwise qualified? Are there people who hire consulting engineer’s that are not engineer’s? Are there consulting physicians that are not doctors? I would say that most of our (VAPSS) consulting soil scientists came to consulting after be-

coming qualified soil scientists.

Our organization is dedicated to the advancement of the profession of soil science. We do not advance the profession unless we advance the individuals that make up the profession.

If you are already a VAPSS member, encourage non-member soils professionals to join so that their experience and knowledge can be added to our collective body. If you are not a member, look into joining up and start taking advantage of the many opportunities we offer for real soils training and interaction with some of the top soils experts our state has to offer. Want to be a soil scientist? Be one. Join VAPSS!

Inside this issue:

<i>Joe Scales Retires</i>	2
<i>Spring Technical Session</i>	2
<i>VAPSS Website</i>	3
<i>Education</i>	3
<i>New Members</i>	4

Special points of interest:

- *Spring Technical Session set for May 22nd in the Richmond area. More details inside.*

VAPSS is for You

The Purpose of VAPSS is to:

☐ Provide a forum for soil scientists

☐ Promote and enhance communication with other technical disciplines

☐ Serve as a body of opinion on matters relating to soils including mapping, classification, and interpretation of soils

☐ Promote certification as a C.P.S.S. to any qualified individual

Soil Scientists Wanted

If you spend your days roaming the weeds and woods, making your living characterizing and evaluating the world beneath your feet, we want you.

As an organization, VAPSS is already home to a wide range of soils professionals from both the private and public sectors.

VAPSS and their partners at Virginia Tech offer a wide variety of practical and technical training opportunities such as Spring and Fall Conferences designed to keep you up to date and educated. They are great times, and great times to expand or refine your knowledge of “the unseen world”.

VAPSS is working to strengthen and promote soil science and soil scientists throughout the state. We offer outreach to the community we serve through programs like the State Fair Exhibit.

Tap into this storehouse of knowledge and advocacy now. Join Up Today!!

Joe Scales Hangs Up Auger

This letter recently arrived from long time member Joe Scales (CPSS #15).

Dear VAPSS and Sue Brown;

I commend the association on many good deeds over the years, however, I will soon be 85 years old and in my twilight years. It is not pleasant to leave an organization that you not only enjoy but find very beneficial to the membership and the clientele. I leave it in good hands and wish it all the best down the road. If a suitable occasion occurs extend my best wishes to the VAPSS members.

Joe added that he had “worked in the field of soil science and conservation from 1948 to 2004: (56 years) and took early retirement last year.”

We bid Joe a fond farewell and wishes for a happy and lengthy retirement.

Coastal GEMS website launched

DEQ has launched an new web based program for planning and public education efforts in Virginias’ Coastal Zone Management Program. This is a gateway for identifying, mapping, and managing Virginias coastal lands and waters. It looks like a good resource for VAPSS members working near the coast (I believe this extends nearly to Covington now). Visit the website at www.deq.virginia.gov/coastal/coastalgems.html. Quoting the website Coastal GEMS is:

A gateway to Virginia’s coastal resource data and maps; coastal laws and policies; facts on coastal resource values; and direct links to agencies responsible for current data.

A collaboration of agencies that simplifies management decisions by showing data from multiple agencies in one place.

A growing inventory of water and land based natural resources, conservation planning tools, and planning examples that can help us to protect Virginia’s coastal ecosystems.

A tool to promote community involvement and environmental education.

Spring Technical Session Set

Hydric Soil Indicators is the (always hot) topic for the VAPSS Spring Technical session. The morning classroom portion will be taught by VA TECH Associate Professor John Galbraith.

John is Virginia’s representative to the Mid-Atlantic Hydric Soils Committee. The session will include an afternoon field trip focusing on identification in the field in natural and constructed

wetlands. The meeting will take place May 22nd at the Marriot Courtyard in Chester VA. More information and sign up sheets are available on the VAPSS website. The cost is \$65 and space is limited so sign up today. Contact Sue Brown 540 231-5741 or John Galbraith 540 231-9748 for more info.



*Sowing the seeds of
soils knowledge*

VDH Regulations in Revision

The VDH on-site sewage regulations are currently under review and revision. The soil evaluation methodologies are detailed and a draft is available on-line at www.vdh.state.va.us/onsite/onsite_reg_revisions.asp.

VAPSS Technical Committee members Chuck Nelson, Harold Mathews, Bruce Legge, and Lee Daniels are soliciting comments from the membership on these revisions and are working to make sure that VAPSS has a voice in insuring that accurate and efficient soil characterization and interpretation practices are put into place.

VAPSS Forum @ www.vapss.org

We now have an open forum where VAPSS members can share their news, views, and pertinent insights with each other. Recent topics have covered the proper use of the web soil survey and the VT soil judges. The VAPSS website has really come a long way lately. Thanks to Dave Harper, John Galbraith and others for all their hard work in www'ing our org.

Articles Wanted

Submit your articles or announcements for the June Newsletter by May 15th. Send them via email to setec@soilandenvironmentaltechnology.com or by fax to 540 381-9430.

More Education and Training Opportunities

NC SOIL SCIENCE EXTENSION Announces: 23rd Annual On-Site Wastewater Treatment Conference Theory and Practice of On-Site Wastewater April 24-26, 2007 North Carolina State University Conference Highlights: Manufacturers Exhibit Hall; Soils and System Siting; Engineering and Design Remote System Monitoring; and Operation System Function and Performance For additional information Call Joni Tanner 919 513-1678

INTRODUCTION TO BASIC SOIL SCIENCE (2 day course) offered by VT Crop and Soils Environmental Science Dept and VAPSS. May 15th and 16th, 2007 in Charlottesville VA. Call Sue Brown 540 231-5741 or email suebrown@vt.edu for more info.

Welcome New Members

VAPSS welcomes Adam Herman, Bryan Campbell, Jessica Kwiatkowski, Brian Patrick, Timothy Woodward, and Joe Murray as new members. Also congratulations to the proud parents of future member Owen Whitehead (born November, 3, 2006). Owen's mom Angie is VAPSS past-president.

VAPSS Board Business by Nan Gray

This is a brand new VAPSS Board this year and they are fired-up! Neal Spiers is leading the charge and eager to see VAPSS grow and become the primary go-to organization for people who need Soil Scientists. Rachael Stull is our President-Elect and she's watching and learning the ropes. David Hall is our Secretary and Newsletter Editor and he's keeping our records straight

and reporting to our membership and other interested parties. Matt Tolley returns as our Treasurer and is keeping our books straight. We're fortunate that our books have always been kept straight. Bill Keeling brings DCR and other regulatory information. Bob Holmes, Chuck Nelson, and Ann Ruff have the private sector side of things. We also have a VPI&SU rotating mem-

ber between Jim Baker, Lee Daniels, and John Galbraith. Sue Brown returns as our Executive Secretary.

Board meetings have focused on setting the agendas for Spring and Fall conferences and keeping up with the many legislative changes proposed in the 2007 General Assembly.

Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists

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www.VAPSS.org

Since 1978.



VT Soil Judging Team Heads to Utah

In a pedologic version of March Madness, the Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team will head for Cache Valley in Utah to try to defend their team judging championship and their second place overall finish from 2006. Of the 23 teams competing, VT will be one that must pay for plane tickets on top of other expenses. That has increased the budget for the second year in a row. The team raised over \$4,500 so far, but still needs about \$1,500. For the next four years the contest will be within driving distance and the expenses will be much lower. Any donations will be greatly appreciated and can be made out to Virginia Tech Foundation (Soil Judging Team in comments section). Soil Tech Inc has made a generous donation and challenges other soil consulting firms and individuals to step up and help fund these budding soil scientists to another championship. Send your generous donations to Sue Brown, VA Tech/CSES, 238 Smyth Hall-0404, Blacksburg VA 24061.

VAPSS Committee's

Below is a list of our committees and the chairpersons. Most committees have openings for members to serve. If you would like to serve on a particular committee or have any input about these topics, please contact the chairperson.

Membership: Rachael Stull

Public Relations and Education: Angie Whitehead

Budget and Finance: Matt Tolley

Technical Advisory: Chuck Nelson

Ethics: Bill Keeling

Newsletter: David Hall

Legislative: Neal Spiers