

MERCURY SCIENCE TEAM MEETING
JUNE 5, 2001

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was held at the DuPont, Waynesboro facility. Attendees are listed on Attachment 1.

Introductions/Welcome (Don Kain / Brenda Kennell). Brenda welcomed all attendees and outlined housekeeping issues for the visitors to the facility. Don introduced two DEQ staffers to the Group: Larry Willis and Ted Turner. Dr. Larry Willis, of DEQ's Roanoke Office, conducted research on the biological communities in the system during the mid 1980s as a Ph.D. candidate under Dr. Hendricks at Virginia Tech. Ted Turner works in DEQ's Harrisonburg Office in the water monitoring program. He was employed by AMRL during the 1990s and was a field crew leader for AMRL's sample collections in 1996. Ralph Stahl introduced and welcomed Dr. Don Orth, chairman of Virginia Tech's Fisheries Science Department, as a guest.

Recap of Last Meeting (Ralph Stahl / Don Kain). Ralph and Don provided a recap of the last meeting (April 3, 2001). Details of the meeting can be found in the summary from that meeting.

Statistical Analyses (John Green). John presented a statistical review of fish mercury concentration data over the many years of the project. A particular focus of this analysis was to determine if mercury levels in fish are increasing or decreasing at individual sites. After normalization of data for fish size, it appeared that concentrations of mercury in fish may be increasing at South River sample stations. It was noted that 1996 seemed to be a particularly high year for mercury concentrations at nearly all sites. With 1996 data removed from the analysis, trends were less apparent, although the South River stations downstream of Waynesboro still appeared to show increases in mercury levels with time. Separate analyses were run for smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, smallmouth and largemouth combined, rock bass, sunfish (excluding redbreast), and redbreast sunfish.

John agreed to conduct an additional review of sunfish, with redbreast included in this grouping. He also agreed to run statistical analyses on sediment data, provided the database is suitable. He recommended that future sampling for fish include at least 10 individuals of each species per site.

John will prepare a written narrative summary of these statistical analyses for the science team, and will include conclusions and any recommendations he believes are appropriate for future sampling.

List of Experts (all). Science team members discussed recent contacts with mercury experts, with the discussion focusing on each expert's availability and willingness to work with our group, the role we see for the individual, and a prioritization of which individuals we may want to work with in the near future. Ralph Stahl and Mike Liberati will review the list and work out some tentative scopes of work, contractual issues, etc. for the 4-5 individuals listed as highest priority.

Stomach Content Proposal (Dr. Don Orth). Dr. Orth presented a proposal for a project to evaluate fish stomach contents and determine mercury concentrations for prey species. This food web study would provide information on bioenergetics and identify critical pathways for mercury transmission to predator species. Dr. Orth felt that a study could begin early in 2002, assuming that funds were available by the first of the year. He will put together a more detailed

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proposal once the science team provides more specific information on the scope of work, including number of sites, target fish species, etc. The team will get back to Dr. Orth following a June 25 conference call to discuss details on the project. In the meantime, Dr. Orth will look into Virginia Tech's overhead issues. Don Kain will check with the state lab (DCLS) to see if the lab can run samples and receive payment directly from DuPont or whether the lab can perform work for and receive payment only from state agencies.

Action Items / Next Meeting. Ralph will set up a conference call for June 25th to discuss the Virginia Tech proposal and the next steps with the "experts" list.

Prior to the next meeting of the Science Team, we will try to get with the members of the Steering Committee and bring them up to date on recent activities and proposed future direction for the Science Team.

The next meeting of the science team will be at the DEQ Harrisonburg office on August 7. Tentative agenda items include:

- Latest / next round of statistical work
- Virginia Tech proposal decision
- results of June 25 conference call
- status of "experts" panel
- fish sampling:
 - ✓ spring 2001 results, if available
 - ✓ proposed fish sampling for 2002
- laboratory analytical issues
- participation from other environmental groups?

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**Attachment 1.
Attendees, Science Team Meeting
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<u>NAME</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Brenda Kennell	DuPont
Bill Van Wart	DEQ
Larry Willis	DEQ
Ted Turner	DEQ
Dick Jensen	DuPont
Ralph Stahl	DuPont
Don Kain	DEQ
Tim LaFountain	VDH
Khizar Wasti	VDH
Paul Bugas	VDGIF
Stephen Reeser	VDGIF
Don Orth	Va. Tech
John Green	DuPont
Mike Liberati	DuPont
Annette Guiseppi-Elie	DuPont