



Virginia State Waters Delineator (VSWD) Certification Program

Program Overview & Requirements

Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection

Office of Training Services

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

16 August 2023

Webinar Outline

- **Welcome** (Mike Rolband, DEQ Director)
- **Program Overview** (Dave Davis, DEQ Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection)
- **Training Requirements & Certification Process** (Kevin Vaughan, DEQ Office of Training Services)
- **Certification Benefits** (Dave Davis)
- **Questions & Answers**



Welcome

Mike Rolband joined DEQ in 2022. He is a Professional Engineer, Professional Wetland Delineator, Professional Wetland Scientist Emeritus, and LEED (green building) Advanced Professional.

Mike has had a lifelong interest in wetlands and stormwater management and its interaction with natural waterbodies. He also has contributed to changes in Virginia environmental laws.



Why Have A New Certification Program?

- Virginia Water Protection (VWP) Permit program regulates **all** state surface waters
- Federal jurisdiction has changed
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has re-prioritized boundary confirmations due to workload
- Professional Wetland Delineator (PWD) only for identifying wetlands, not other surface waters



VSWD Program Objectives

- VSWD Certification Program is **voluntary**
- DEQ still accepts Corps verifications
- Baseline skills to correctly determine six parameters for state surface waters
 - Wetlands: wetland hydrology, hydric soils, and hydrophytic vegetation
 - Streams, ponds, open water: stream bank presence, stream bed presence, and ordinary high-water mark (OHWM)
- Accurate and reliable state surface waters delineations (SSWD)
 - Reduce incomplete VWP permit applications
 - Consistent submittal requirements
 - VWP permit review timeframes stay on track



Obtaining VSWD Certification: Overview



Step 1 – Obtain your PWD Certification

To obtain DEQ's Virginia State Waters Delineator Certification you must already hold a PWD license [from DPOR](#).

Step 2 – Record your PWD # in CATS



DEQ uses the [Certification Accreditation Tracking System \(CATS\)](#) for individuals to manage their DEQ certifications.



Step 3 – Attend DEQ Stream ID Training

- Register in DEQ's [Environmental Learning Management System \(ELMS\)](#)
- Enroll in *Wetlands: Stream Identification Curriculum*
 - Upcoming Stream ID courses (includes field visit)
 - Northern: Sept. 6 – DEQ Woodbridge Regional Office
 - Tidewater: Sept. 13 - James City County Law Enforcement Center
 - Richmond: Sept. 27 - DEQ Piedmont Regional Office
 - Stream ID exam
 - Unlocked after course roster completed



Instructor for DEQ Stream Identification Course


Douglas A. DeBerry, Ph.D., PWS, PWD

- Board Member for the Virginia Professional Wetland Delineator DPOR Certification Program
- Certified Professional Wetland Delineator (PWD) and Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS)
- Research Assistant Professor, College of William & Mary

Step 4 – Complete DEQ Stream ID Exam

- Login to ELMS
- Access the [Wetlands: Stream Identification Curriculum](#)
- Launch the Stream Identification exam
 - Timed: 45 minutes
 - Complete in one sitting
 - 80% pass requirement
 - 3 attempts



A close-up photograph of a person's hand using a computer mouse on a wooden desk. In the foreground, a large, three-dimensional '@' symbol is cut out of a piece of brown cardboard. The background is softly blurred, showing a white container and other desk items.

Step 5 – Email your curriculum completion certificate

- Once you complete your exam, View Completed Transcript in ELMS
- Download your curriculum certificate of completion and email it to: certification@deq.virginia.gov
- VSWD certification will be added to CATS.
- VSWD certification is valid for 3 years (CATS will remind you)
- Continuing education model for recertification

Demo of Training Systems

- [CATS \(Certification Accreditation Tracking System\)](#)
- [ELMS \(Environmental Learning Management System\)](#)





What Happens Once I'm Certified?

- Perform desktop research and fieldwork using the required VSWD information and forms
- Submit complete delineation information, including SSWD request form (with a signed Property Access Agreement)
- DEQ will perform completeness review within 15 days
- If complete information submitted, DEQ will verify delineation within 30 days (unless a site visit is necessary)
- SSWDs will be tracked in PEEP
- All site visits will be scheduled with VSWD who performed the work
- Once verified, the SSWD will suffice for VWP permitting purposes

VSWD Program Audit

- DEQ will track overall quality and completeness of submittals
- DEQ may field verify any delineation submitted for SSWD
- A trend of deficient work may result in more field visits
- A trend of deficiency is three or more of any combination of the following:
 - Incomplete Final Delineation Report submittals over a given calendar year; or
 - Significant concerns for accuracy over a given calendar year; or
 - Field verification changes over 5% of the submitted delineation boundary.
 - “Over 5%” is the percentage of:
 - (i) the total number of survey flags along the state surface waters boundaries, or
 - (ii) the cumulative length of boundary line, whichever is more.





I'm Not VSWD Certified?

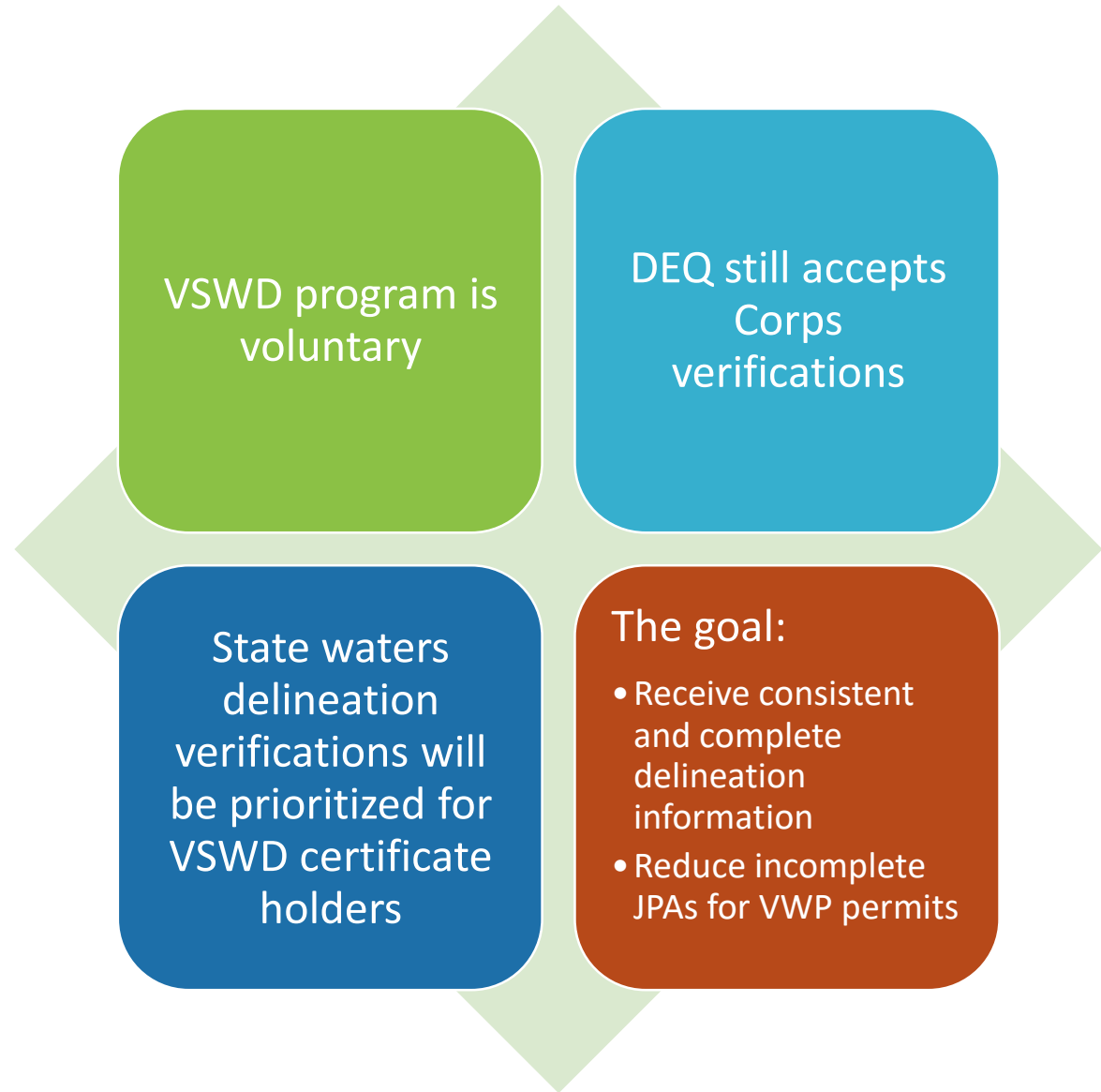
- Submit delineation information, including SSWD request form (with a signed Property Access Agreement)
- DEQ will perform completeness review; striving for 15-30 days
- If complete information submitted, DEQ striving to verify delineation within 60 days (unless a site visit is necessary)
- Once verified, the SSWD will suffice for VWP permitting purposes

Next Steps

- CATS (Certification Accreditation Tracking System)
 - Add your PWD#
- ELMS (Environmental Learning Management System)
 - Enroll in Wetlands: Stream ID curriculum
 - Attend the course (Sept. 6 NRO, Sept. 13 Williamsburg, or Sept. 27 PRO)
 - Take the online test



Summary





But Wait!! There's More...

DEQ is encouraging you to get the VSWD Certification by:

- ✓ Waiving fees for the stream ID class
- ✓ Waiving fees for the VSWD Certificate

**ACT NOW...OFFER EXPIRES
JUNE 30, 2024**

Questions?

