

## House Joint Resolution No. 313

**Press Release**      **Date: April 14, 2004**

For immediate release

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Monitors of Izaak Walton's Virginia Save Our Streams Program recognized by joint resolution of the Virginia General Assembly

Lexington Virginia, April 1 2004 – At the Environment Virginia Conference, held at VMI, Delegate Ken Plum (D, Reston) presented a copy of bill hj313, a joint resolution recognizing the efforts of more than 300 volunteer stream monitors of the Virginia Save Our Streams Program (Va SOS). Va SOS has been a priority project of the Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) since 1996. The resolution was accepted by Jay Gilliam, coordinator of the Va SOS program. Gilliam thanked Del. Plum for sponsoring the resolution along with co-sponsors Del. Harvey Morgan (R, Gloucester) and Del. Jim Dillard (R, Fairfax).

Va SOS provides training and support services to interested citizens who commit to making careful observations of the streams that comprise a local watershed. The primary technique used by Va SOS volunteer monitors is a biological method that measures the diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrates living in the benthic zone of a freshwater stream. Two methods are employed due to the physical differences of streams in eastern and western Virginia. Research to validate and improve the western Virginia method has been carried out at Virginia Tech. Similar research for an eastern Virginia method is being completed at Randolph Macon College at Ashland

“Dedicated citizen stewards are present in every watershed no matter how small,” said Gilliam. “People of all ages and backgrounds can find an important role with Va SOS, partnering, in a meaningful way, with state agencies to protect natural resources.”



Although initial program support came from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Virginia Environmental Endowment, Va SOS is transitioning to a more diverse support scheme. Due to economic decline and resulting budget cuts, Va SOS is beginning to impose a fee for their service. Thankfully, philanthropic organizations such as the Beirne Carter Foundation and the Austin Family Foundation, as well as individual chapters of the IWLA, are stepping forward to sponsor these activities.

“These organizations generous financial support will allow us to continue to serve the interested and concerned citizens throughout the Commonwealth. Hj313 is a tribute to the 300+ dedicated Va SOS water monitors. It will help us in our efforts to make the Save Our Streams Program a sustainable part of the non regulatory effort to protect our immensely valuable but fragile surface waters,” said Gilliam.

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(see next page for full text of hj313)

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 313

Offered January 26, 2004

*Commending Virginia Save Our Streams.*

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Patrons – Plum, Dillard and Morgan

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WHEREAS, Virginia Save Our Streams has been a priority program of the Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League since 1996; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Save Our Streams has initiated numerous programs, collected valuable data, and reached into a growing number of Virginia communities over the past several years; and

WHEREAS, each year, Virginia Save Our Streams provides informational and training sessions to interested citizen groups, at no cost, and in 2002 held more than 70 such training sessions; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Save Our Streams trains and certifies monitors to ensure the quality of data collected, and to date the organization has trained 350 certified monitors across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, water quality data is collected by Virginia Save Our Streams three or four times per year at 230 sites in more than 50 Virginia communities; and

WHEREAS Virginia Save Our Streams has worked with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and with the Entomology Department at Virginia Tech to validate and refine its biomonitoring methods; and

WHEREAS, working with the Virginia Department of Forestry, the United States Forestry Service, and three Virginia colleges, Virginia Save Our Streams is developing new methods to improve the quality of the data it provides to natural resource professionals; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Save Our Streams has entered cooperative agreements with the Virginia Departments of Environmental Quality and Conservation and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Save Our Streams now serves 53 Virginia localities, from Accomack to Washington, Fairfax to Farmville, and Bath to Suffolk; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Virginia Save Our Streams for its ongoing efforts to encourage citizens to participate in the quest for clean water; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Jay Gilliam, coordinator of Virginia Save Our Streams, as an expression of the admiration, respect, and best wishes of the General Assembly.