

JAMES J. PLETL, Ph.D.

Education

Alfred University
B.S., 1983
Biology

Old Dominion University
Ph.D., 1992
Biological Oceanography

Position-Specific Experience

2011- present Director, Water Quality Department, Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD),
Virginia Beach, VA

Position responsible for:

providing leadership, oversight and strategic direction for the Pretreatment and Pollution Prevention, Central Environmental Laboratory, and Technical Services functions for HRSD, involving a staff of 90 positions

participating actively in the HRSD Quality Steering Team (QST) to coordinate and implement strategic planning, address policy issues and resolve management concerns

leading the Water Quality QST in continuous improvement, resolving CWA and CAA permit issues, negotiating regulatory and legislative requirements at the state and national level, and serving as the communication link between staff and top management

ensuring that all department activities are in compliance with state and federal regulations and conform with general and specific quality practices

facilitating HRSD leadership in new regulatory developments

2006- 2011 Chief, Technical Services Division, HRSD
Position responsible for:

leading and monitoring technical and staff development activities of approximately 20 employees including six managers at a professional level;

ensuring that the division and department comply with applicable laws and regulations;

leading negotiations in Federal and State legislative, regulatory and permit processes to provide results that are consistent with the HRSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan;

providing HRSD management with timely strategic, technical and policy

recommendations on issues associated with existing, proposed or emerging regulatory and legislative activities that may affect HRSD;

leading Water Quality Department continuous improvement efforts using various metrics;

providing HRSD departments with regulatory compliance assistance, specialized services and studies, audits, record keeping and reporting support;

providing specialized sampling services and permit support to other Virginia municipal agencies;

and communicating and promoting HRSD's Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan within the division, department and throughout the organization relative to current and future activities.

1989- 2006 Environmental Scientist, HRSD, Virginia Beach, VA.
Position responsible for:

acting as environmental and technical liaison, in a lead capacity, between HRSD, State, Federal and national organizations, members of consultant, contracting, municipal and engineering fields and the general public. Position participates or leads local, state and/or national teams often consisting of members with widely divergent perspectives requiring ability to build consensus on controversial issues;

developing positions, communicating issues and building consensus within HRSD as well as among diverse stakeholder groups at the local, state and national level on topics specific to laboratory performance including QA/QC, quality systems, detection/quantitation, standards of performance, etc.;

negotiating HRSD chemical and toxicity permit requirements and similarly support dozens of other municipalities (in state and nationally) when dealing with various permit development and compliance issues;

maintaining knowledge and routinely leading development of comments and correspondence on various State and Federal environmental issues, guidance and regulations;

advising senior management of current requirements and changes established by EPA and State regulations and policies as well as emerging issues;

developing Virginia municipal position regarding numerous water quality issues such as water quality criteria, laboratory performance, regulatory reporting, permit limit derivation, 303(d)/305(b) listings, and TMDLs;

meeting HRSD VPDES toxics monitoring requirements, with emphasis on quality and integrity, for HRSD's 13 wastewater treatment plants including management of in-house toxicity testing laboratory activities, establishment of objectives and goals, ensuring compliance with all enforceable standards and regulations and necessary resources are available to staff, and regulatory compliance assessments;

managing data, data analysis, interpretation, and preparation of technical reports and information materials for visual and oral presentation to staff, other wastewater agencies, members of the public, industry, attorneys, consultants, the laboratory community, State and Federal regulatory agencies;

developing, designing, implementing and coordinating special studies to address HRSD regulatory issues such as wastewater treatment performance and compliance as well as service area toxics control;

conducts staff and team meetings, communicates expectations to staff while continuing to develop personal technical and leadership skills.

1984-1988 Special Doctoral Fellow, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Responsible for meeting most of the objectives of Virginia Sea Grant Account R/CF-20, "Biological Factors as Determinants of Blue Crab Recruitment", a three-year study. Solely responsible for experimental design; methodology; conducting experiments; study QA/QC; data management, analysis and interpretation, supply and equipment inventory and scheduling. Extensive technique development in culturing various organisms was also required.

1983-1984 Research Assistant, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Position with Virginia Sea Grant R/CF-11, "Distribution and Recruitment of Blue Crab Larvae in the Mid-Atlantic Bight". Participated in all facets of study which focused on collection, identification and enumeration of crustacean decapod larvae; and computer management of data.

General Applicable Experience

Knowledge in:

working within local, state and federal level groups and committees to negotiate outcomes that are scientifically defensible, reasonable, attainable and support HRSD's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan;

developing public messages regarding controversial topics including SSOs and interceptor line breaks and possible environmental impact, chemicals of concern in commercial products, and emerging contaminants in wastewater;

ensuring regulatory compliance by working closely with the Operations and Engineering departments;

managing regulatory reporting for air, water and biosolids permits including the preparation of monthly DMRs and semi-annual and annual certification reports for air permits;

overseeing the negotiations of water and air permits;

regulatory requirements statewide needed to ensure consistency; accomplished by working closely with other municipal wastewater agencies in Virginia and the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies;

sponsoring and leading teams; accomplished by establishing a clear Scope of Work, adequate resources, deadlines and measures;

use of sampling and analytical methods and concepts according to federally promulgated methods, EPA's various guidance documents and policies related to the regulation of air and water discharges, data quality concepts and goals, validation approaches for analytical test methods, lab accreditation;

federal and state NPDES permit programs, toxics regulations, water quality standards for human health and aquatic life, and site-specific standard development methodologies and variations that occur between regulatory agencies nation-wide;

computer and software skills in MS Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint.

Professional Experience

Current leadership and membership activities:

Member of Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) Exploratory & Issue Area Teams

Member of the Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Member of WEF's Government Affairs Committee

Chair of the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies' Water Quality Committee

Vice-Chair of National Assoc. of Clean Water Agencies' (NACWA) Water Quality Committee

Previous leadership and membership activities:

Member of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Team

Member of DEQ's TAC on amending Virginia Water Quality Standards

Member of DEQ's TAC on amending the Virginia General Nutrient Permit Regulation

Member of nine WERF Project Subcommittees (PSCs) on Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) issues, UAAs, cyanide water quality criteria/wastewater interactions/measurements and trace organic chemicals, nutrient criteria

Member of EPA's Federal Advisory Committee on Detection and Quantitation

Member of The NELAC Institute's Proficiency Testing Committee

Chair of the SETAC Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) on WET Training

Chair of the Elizabeth River Project Technical Subcommittee on Monitoring

Chair/Member of EPA's Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board

Member of EPA Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Dissolved Oxygen Criteria Development Workgroup

Member of EPA CBP Toxics Subcommittee

Member of American Water Works Association Standard Methods Committee 8010

Member of the SETAC EAP on WET Performance Evaluation and Data Interpretation

Member of the SETAC EAP on WET TIE/TREs

Presentations

Since 1987, well over 50 invited presentations/papers have been prepared for local, state and national audiences on a number of environmental technical and policy topics. These include topics such as water quality criteria development and reliability, site-specific water quality standards, national laboratory accreditation, analytical QA/QC and regulatory compliance issues, the NPDES whole effluent toxicity program, toxicity identification/reduction evaluations, lab accreditation issues, and processes used to derive NPDES permit limits. These presentations were made at annual SETAC, WEF, National Environmental Monitoring Council, NELAC, American Society of Zoology, and Air and Waste Management Association meetings as well as various SETAC WET training courses, NACWA technical conferences, VAMWA member meetings and for State/Federal special topic committees and workshops.