

About the *National Water Quality Monitoring Council*

Introduction

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) provides an opportunity for the monitoring community to develop consensus-based approaches and tools for monitoring and reporting on water quality. The Council promotes partnerships that foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management of our water resources. The Council strives to represent the full range of the monitoring community.

NWQMC's Mission
Provide a national forum to coordinate consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies for improving water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting.

The Challenge of Multi-Agency Monitoring

Each year, government agencies, industry, academia, and private organizations devote enormous amounts of time, energy, and money to monitor, protect, manage, and restore water resources and watersheds. Differences in project design, methods, data analysis, and data management have often made it difficult for monitoring information and results to be shared and used by all. The restoration and protection of water quality is dependent upon detailed, understandable, and easily accessible data and information.

Responding to the Challenge: The National Water Quality Monitoring Council

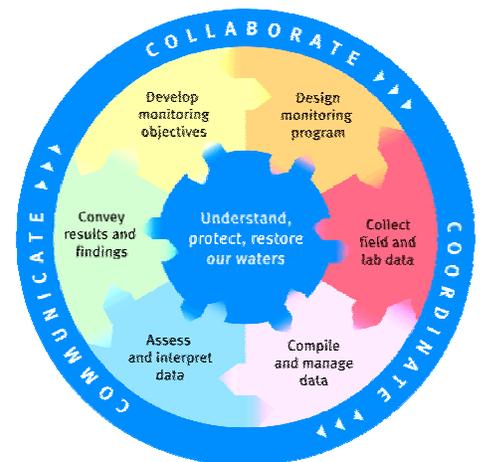
The Council provides guidance and technical support for voluntary implementation of actions that advance the science of monitoring. This is best accomplished in an arena of collaborative and coordinated efforts communicated to all interested parties. In sum, these actions will ultimately improve water quality monitoring. The Council encourages use of metadata, lab accreditation, methods documentation, and other procedures that contribute to the broadest possible acceptance, sharing, and use of water quality data. The Council promotes effective communication of monitoring results and findings to decision-makers and the general public. In some cases, Council Work Groups develop tools and techniques. Examples of these are the National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI) and Water Quality Data Elements. In other cases, the Council provides a venue for wide-ranging discussion and dissemination of new methods and technologies developed by others through its website and at its National Monitoring Conferences.

Membership and Organization

The Council was created in 1997 as a vehicle for bringing together the diverse expertise, skills, and talents needed to develop collaborative, comparable, and cost-effective approaches to water quality monitoring. The Council's thirty-five members represent the monitoring community: federal, tribal, state, interstate, local, and municipal governments; watershed and environmental groups; the volunteer monitoring community; academia; and the private sector including the regulated community. These are organizations that collect, analyze, interpret, disseminate, or use water quality monitoring information as well as those that develop monitoring technology, guidelines, and/or standards. The Council is co-chaired by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Council reports to the Advisory Committee on Water Information that operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

A Framework for Monitoring

The Council, with broad and significant input from the monitoring community, has developed a pictorial framework for monitoring that shows the components of the monitoring process (as a series of interlinked cogs) needed to understand, protect, and restore our water resources.



Incorporating the components of this framework into monitoring projects will improve monitoring efforts, results, and communication of information. (See the Council's Framework Fact Sheet and the American Water Resources Association IMPACT, September 2003 issue, Volume 5, No. 5).

Council Activities and Products

The Council has taken a number of steps to encourage the water quality monitoring community to integrate the components of the monitoring framework into their efforts. The following examples of Council activities and products showcase efforts to improve data comparability and reliability as well as foster institutional collaboration:

- Organizing and sponsoring biennial **National Monitoring Conferences** since 1998; each conference attended by more than 400 active participants representing a wide spectrum of the monitoring community. These conferences provide a national forum to present and explore methods and strategies for improving water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting as well presenting specific ways to foster collaboration and coordination.
- Providing guidance and support for **State and Regional Water Quality Monitoring Councils**. These councils bring members of the monitoring community together to share their expertise and knowledge and to promote strategic monitoring efforts at an appropriate scale.
- Sponsoring development and adoption of the **National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI)** that provides assistance in choosing appropriate field and laboratory methods to meet specified monitoring objectives. See www.nemi.gov for additional information.
- Sponsoring development and adoption of the **Water Quality Data Elements** - metadata that should be included with water quality results so that data comparability can be assessed.
- Publishing position papers on **Laboratory Accreditation** that describe a process that will give regulators and others in the monitoring community confidence that water quality data have been produced by qualified personnel using appropriate quality control and quality assurance procedures.

NWQMC Members and Alternates (A)

Gail Mallard, US Geological Survey, Co-Chair	James Laine (A), West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
Chuck Spooner, US Environmental Protection Agency, Co-Chair	Eugene Lamb, National Association of Conservation Districts
Mary Ambrose, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Fred Leslie, Alabama Department of Environmental Management
Bill Backous, Washington Department of Ecology	Barry Long, National Park Service
Herb Brass, US Environmental Protection Agency	Jeff Loser, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Valerie Connor, California State Water Resources Control Board	Seth Makepeace (A), Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Jim Cox, National Association of State Conservation Agencies	Greg Masson, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Curtis Cude (A), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality	Sylvia McCollor (A), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Paul Currier, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services	Karl Muessig, Association of American State Geologists
Geoff Dates (A), River Network	Christine Olsenius (A), Tennessee Valley Authority
Edmond Deal (A), Association of American State Geologists	Deborah Patton, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.
David Denig-Chakroff, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies	Charlie Peters, US Geological Survey
Naomi Duerr, South Florida Water Management District	Dan Radulescu, Water Environment Federation
Don Dycus, Tennessee Valley Authority	Tom Sanders (A), Colorado State University
Geoffrey Ekechukwu (A), US Fish and Wildlife Service	Jeff Schloss, North American Lake Management Society
Art Garceau, Indiana Department of Environmental Management	Hal Stanford, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Linda Green, University of Rhode Island Watershed Watch	Peter Tennant, Ohio River Valley Water and Sanitation Commission
Judy Griffin, US Geological Survey, Executive Secretary	David Tucker, Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies
Toni Johnson, US Geological Survey	Jon Van Soestbergen, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Chris Knopp, US Forest Service	Robert Ward, Colorado State University
Alfred Korndoerfer, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	

To learn more about the Council, visit our website at <http://water.usgs.gov/wicp/acwi/monitoring/>