

ACWI 2007 Annual Meeting
January 17-18, 2007
Crown Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Herndon, VA

Draft-3/08/2007

HIGHLIGHTS and ACTION ITEMS – Presented in order of the Agenda

<Please send comments to Toni Johnson at tjohnson@usgs.gov>

I. Welcome Remarks (Mark Myers, Director, U.S. Geological Survey)

Opening remarks were made by Mark Myers, new Director of the USGS. The Director commented on the diverse representation of agencies within the ACWI and that membership represents major areas in current water information efforts. Director Myers emphasized the need to convey the value of science and data and indicated that continued budget support is key and appears to be present. He sees ACWI as a key component to making this happen. ACWI's efforts are extremely valuable.

II. The Heinz Center (Robin O'Malley)

In regard to the Administration's Initiative on Environmental Indicators, Robin reported that a 10 member panel from the National Association of Public Administration (NAPA) – including universities and the private sector, will meet in February to look at series of options for institutionalizing National Environmental Indicators. Department of the Interior is one of the participating agencies.

Tentative target is for senior staff in Interior and EPA is to implement any recommendations in FY 09. Recommendations from the panel are due by late summer, in a very short cycle.

ACWI will attempt to communicate with NAPA, working through Ted Heintz at the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Ted has promised to keep ACWI informed as this process moves forward.

III. ACWI Report: The National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Charles Spooner, EPA Council Co-Chair)

Chuck Spooner presented the proposed reorganization of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) work group structure, which was handed out at the meeting. (Reference the link under ACWI 2007 presentations at <http://acwi.gov/acwi2007/slide.lib/index.html> web site.) He noted that the Council's structure evolves to reflect the issues at hand. The Council requested ACWI concurrence on work group reorganization.

Several ACWI members raised questions regarding the proposed structure, which seemed very extensive, asking if any current component could be phased out? Answer: one work group already has been phased out and merged into another existing workgroup, reducing from 4 to 3; however, that work group is then adding smaller subgroups to focus on various issues, plus there is a Steering Committee under the Council for the National Monitoring Network project. ACWI members requested a brief written description on the function of each component before accepting the new structure. Council Co-Chairs, Charles Spooner, EPA and Gail Mallard, USGS agreed to compose a document with the requested descriptions.

ACTION: Executive Secretary will send the Council descriptions to ACWI members by electronic mail; ACWI members will be polled electronically to approve the proposed structure.

IV. Network for US Coastal Waters and Their Tributaries – Pilot Studies

(Daniel Walker, Office of Science and Technology Policy-OSTP)

Dan Walker discussed the National Water Quality Monitoring Network for US Coastal Waters and their Tributaries (Network) and the next Phase II, to do pilot studies. Dan brought to ACWI a formal request (letter dated January 17, 2007) from CEQ, signed by the Chairman of the Committee on Ocean Policy (COP), requesting that ACWI continue their involvement in the Network pilot process. An Interagency Working Group (as ACWI recommended in January 2006), composed of representatives from OSTP, EPA, NOAA, and USGS has been formed to guide this process, with advice provided by the Network Steering Committee of the Council. The Council is interested in having a role as the Network moves toward implementation. Broad agency input will provide more traction for moving forward. ACWI made a motion to accept the request and continue to guide this process through the Council.

Motion: Fred Bloetscher, representing American Water Works Association

Second: Don Dycus, representing Tennessee Valley Authority

ACWI: Unanimous Concurrence

Motion Approved

Thank you from Dan Walker

Network Next steps:

- Announce plans and request Letters of Interest in pilot studies from potential partners
- Evaluate responses based on Criteria to be approved by ACWI (at luncheon roundtable on Network Criteria scheduled for tomorrow)
- Select at least two pilot studies for implementation in FY 2007
- Confirm the timing of the project
- Coordinate work with ACWI and its subgroups
- Report every 4 months to the following Ocean and related Committees:
The Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST); the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) and the National Council on Science and Technology's Subcommittee on Water Availability and Quality (SWAQ).
- Keep potential future partners informed on process and progress of pilots
- Report back to ACWI on January 2008 on results of pilot studies

ACTION: ACWI Executive Secretary to draft a letter back to CEQ/COP on behalf of ACWI that ACWI will accept the charge and continue in its role.

V. Subcommittee on Hydrology -- Satellite Telemetry Interagency Working Group (STIWG) with response by NOAA's National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS)

NOAA recognizes the importance of the GOES DCS stakeholders and welcomes the opportunity to increase the effectiveness of communications on issues of mutual interest. NOAA acknowledges the role of the STIWG in representing the broader user community interests and desire to assist NOAA in exploring options. NOAA indicated that for the next GOES R satellite, there would be plenty of opportunity for increased interaction regarding backup for the critical realtime data. The ACWI Chair encouraged continued dialog between SOH/STIWG and NOAA/NESDIS to enhance backup for these systems, which provide critical real-time data for emergency management. STIWG agreed to continue to work with NOAA to improve and increase communications.

VI. NWQMC National Monitoring Conference –

Ongoing plans for 2008 National Monitoring Conference to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 18-22, 2008. Conference Tri-Chairs are Charles Spooner EPA, Jawed Hameedi NOAA and Eric Vowinkel USGS New Jersey. An agreement is in process with the ACWI member, Water

Environment Federation to provide conference support to the Council's Conference Planning Committee (CPC).

ACTION: ACWI member organizations interested in participating or supporting the 2008 National Monitoring Conference should contact Eric Vowinkel, USGS, vowinkel@usgs.gov

VII. **US Environmental Protection Agency Update on National Surveys** (Susan Holdsworth, EPA/Office of Water)

Susan Holdsworth provided an overview of EPA's National Surveys and proposed actions for 2007. Goal of partnership surveys is for EPA to report on the condition of the Nation's waters with documented confidence, at regional and national scales, with the option for state-scale estimates and to promote collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. EPA is developing a water quality exchange (WQX) network for easier data sharing, to support electronic reporting of integrated water quality assessments, and provide geospatial tools to support program integration, including the National Hydrography Dataset (NHDPlus).

Bob Hirsch suggested to Susan that ACWI can help spread word about WQX.

ACTION: EPA will let ACWI Executive Secretary know when the WQX is available for public access, and ACWI can get the word out to its constituents. Susan agreed to do that.

VIII. **Subcommittee on Hydrology and Subcommittee on Sedimentation** –

Reported on the success of the 2006 joint conference, and announced plans for a 2nd joint Hydrologic Modeling and Sedimentation Conference in 2010, location yet to be determined. ACWI offered a motion in support of the joint conference.

Motion: Steven Heiskary, representing North American Lake Management Society

Second: Fred Bloetscher, representing American Water Works Association

ACWI: Unanimous concurrence

Motion Approved

IX. **ACWI Membership Renewals and Vacancies**

Toni reminded everyone about the need to renew ACWI memberships and fill vacancies. Need to complete this activity by October 2007. Toni announced that ACWI needs a letter from each member organization as to whether they want to continue their representation in ACWI for another 4-year term. The letter should specify if the current representative will remain, or they wish to nominate new reps. Toni also asked that an alternate be named. The new Whitehouse Liaison is asking that a brief biography (including name, state, contact info and brief summary) for each individual rep and alt be sent along with the letter. The modified process (no forms to complete) is supposed to be quicker, but there are no guarantees. Next step is letters from the Secretary of the Interior to invite each organization to continue or to join ACWI. ACWI cannot meet after this fall until all letters are signed by the Secretary. Toni will get the renewal process started after this meeting.

ACTION: All representatives should notify their organization's headquarters contact as to whether they wish to continue their representation, and alert them that the renewal process should begin this spring.

ACTION: ACWI Executive Secretary to begin renewal process by April 1, 2007.

Toni also noted that there are a number of vacancies on the committee and has asked for input on suggested new members from the current representation. Vacancies are as follows:

- private sector – industry, esp. chemical/pharmaceutical
- environmental group;
- recreation group – such as, American Whitewater, American Canoe...
- state association, such as, Association of State Wetland Managers (preliminary contact made).

Bob Hirsch asked if those at the table had suggestions. Suggestions from current members included Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, American Rivers, Riverkeepers, Trout Unlimited, Wildlife Federation, National Water Resources Association, Business Roundtables, Great Lakes Council of Governors.

ACTION: Any additional suggestions or specific contact names and info should be sent to ACWI Exec Sec at tjohnson@usgs.gov by cob March 31, 2007.

X. **Ad hoc steering committee on Ground Water Monitoring (SOGW)**

Request to form new ACWI Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW) and for ACWI to approve draft Terms of Reference (TOR).

Process started about a year ago with (ACWI 2006) with additional input at May 2006 National Monitoring Conference during a special session. Continued communications at July NWQMC meeting. ACWI was briefed at October 2006 Interim Meeting and TOR reviewed by ACWI in December via email and conference call.

- Seeking approval on TOR
- Key points
 - Shortages of GW expected
 - GW important
 - Lack of data
- Provided overview of ACWI suggestions and recommendations received and revised TOR for ACWI approval
- Main deliverable will be to develop a national framework for GW monitoring, design, and collaboration. Proposed timeframe is 12-18 months.
- Need to evaluate and prioritize objectives.

ACWI moved to approve the SOGW TOR:

Motion: Emery Cleaves, representing Association of American State Geologists

Second: Mike Paque, representing Ground Water Protection Council

ACWI unanimously approved the TOR.

Proposed SOGW Work Plan – Provided a brief overview of the work plan and a handout for ACWI, covering the next 12-month period.

- Proposed Subcommittee Structure for SOGW with 4 work groups:
 - **Monitoring inventory work group** – look at existing products, even internationally. Looking to inventory what is there. Looking for ideas on framework that needs to be set up. Interested in what states are doing too, but interested in the design of the framework.
 - **Data standards and data management work group** – working in collaboration with WQDE folks. Possible that CUAHSI and ESRI are working on groundwater data model. Will look at those products and developing standards for data collection and management. Strong emphasis on GW.
 - **Field practices work group** – field practices will differ greatly from other disciplines. How do you get data from something you can't see. Bore holes, remote sensing. Use of gravity sensing/surveys.
 - **Monitoring network work group** – take information from the other 3 work groups and put together a “strawman” for the framework. Update this as the process moves along. Coordination with other ACWI groups is key.

- We know this is aggressive, there are timing issues, and need strict data discovery time – then move on. These activities would continue, but need to get some information out for deliverable in a year's time.
- Need volunteers and / or guidance
 - Interested in other folks
 - Sign-up sheet to take advantage of this
- Lessons learned
 - Would like to hear about critical 1st steps, pitfalls, etc... that others have experienced when starting a subcommittee
- Will have additional time at lunch roundtable for discussion
 - Additional suggestions for participation
 - Discussion of work plan
 - Continued guidance

Recommendations for committee are to go to Co-Chairs: Bill Cunningham (wlcunning@usgs.gov) or Bob Schreiber (Schreiberrp@cdm.com).

Hirsch comment on membership — many states have excellent GW monitoring groups. TX well represented and managed. Good resource that can be vital – WSWC and ICWP – make sure reach out to these folks. A lot of responsibility lies with states – State Geological Surveys, etc...

XI. CUAHSI

Hirsch – sizeable investment being made to foster what is much of the mission of ACWI – enhancing the availability of data sources. Too good to pass this opportunity up. From USGS perspective, would like to see closer partnership between ACWI and CUAHSI – that's where the money is.

- XII. **Action from Toni** -- ACWI, Board, and Council will get stats on Web hits... will get them on-line and send out in email.
- XIII. **Roundtables – as you get notes, actions, etc... please send them to Toni via email.** There will be a section in the minutes on-line and will share in email the suggestions from those groups.
- XIV. Toni thanked the members for their participation. Will be happy to put together a blurb for use on your Web sites or in your newsletters.