

**SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE CALL OF THE  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WATER INFORMATION'S (ACWI)  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HYDROLOGY (SOH)  
1:00-2:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time  
Monday, December 21, 2015  
Via phone and online conference**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chairman Robert Mason called the meeting to order.

2. Roll-Call

Members of the subcommittee in attendance were identified. Initially, only 11 subcommittee members were identified and due to the lack of quorum the meeting was described as an informational meeting with no binding votes possible. However, several people joined later in the meeting and a quorum of 14 subcommittee members was reached. The conference call was attended by a total of 23 people, including subcommittee members and guests. A list of conference call attendees is included as Attachment 1.

3. Agenda

The meeting agenda was shared online by Robert Mason. A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Tom Nicholson and seconded by Don Woodward. The motion carried.

It was noted that Will Thomas was not able to be present at the meeting, so Robert Mason and John England presented his agenda items.

The agenda is included as Attachment 2.

4. SOH Communications Plan

The November 30 version of the SOH communications plan for the Bulletin 17C update was shared online. This is similar to what was sent to the membership in October for the purposes of answering questions posed at the July meeting. It describes shared ownership of the report between the USGS and the SOH.

The report is following USGS policies for review and publication. Initially, the USGS staff overseeing the publication had designated the report as "influential science", but following a re-consideration after a Hydrologic Frequency Analysis Workgroup (HFAWG) member request, the report was designated as "highly influential science assessment." This requires a more stringent process for peer review.

Robert Mason asked for questions at this point, and Martin Becker asked how many agencies were involved in the publication. The answer is the USGS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, and Bureau of Reclamation, but the USGS only one agency needs to prepare a peer review plan on any one item and the USGS has the lead on this publication.

Regarding item 6, the response to comments, Bill Merkel noted that the plan states that the SOH will respond to public comments on the plan. He requested that HFAWG not be bypassed, and a note was made to amend the plan to add HFAWG.

Tom Nicholson made a motion to adopt the SOH communications plan. Don Woodward seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### 5. Nomination and Confirmation of Peer Reviewers

Before a discussion of the peer review process, Martin Becker raised some questions regarding the publication process. Due to concerns about having to “circle back” or repeat any processes to ensure compliance with all policies, he asked if this process had been checked with the Department of Interior Office of Scientific Integrity. Robert Mason offered to double check, but Dave Raff interjected that there was no DOI Office of Scientific Integrity, that responsibilities for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) peer-review guidelines had been delegated to the DOI bureaus including the USGS. The proposed peer review process is following USGS guidelines, which are consistent with OMB guidelines. The proposed public comment process is also consistent with these guidelines.

The SOH communication plan identified a process for selecting peer-reviewers that includes nomination by the HFAWG chair and confirmation by the SOH and USGS. Three peer reviewers were nominated by the Will Thomas (Chair, HFAWG) via an email to Robert Mason and forwarded to the full SOH on December 15. In Will’s absence John England presented the slate of nominated peer reviewers and described the process for identifying the reviewers, based on their long record of journal publications, work with large datasets, and expertise with flood-frequencies analysis techniques. The proposed reviewers are:

Gabriele Villaine, University of Iowa  
Richard Vogel, Tufts University  
Charles Kroll, SUNY Syracuse

Martin Becker asked if compensation had been discussed with any of the reviewers. The answer was “No compensation has been discussed with any of the reviewers”. Tom Nicholson asked in the reviewers had been informed about the length of the report or time required to review it. John England responded that they had been given the table of contents of the report, but no estimate or expectation of time required was given to them.

Robert Mason asked for a motion to approve the peer reviewers. Don Woodward made the motion, and Tom Nicholson seconded the motion to accept the nominated peer reviewers. The motion carried.

#### 6. B17C Draft Report

The proposed B17C draft was provided by Will Thomas to Robert Mason and forwarded to the SOH by Robert on December 15. Tom Nicholson asked John England to summarize the changes that had been made to the draft report since the presentation at the July quarterly meeting. These changes were as follows:

- 1) Graphics were changed to make them more clear and understandable
- 2) A small section on extraordinary floods was added

- 3) Clear text on what we don't know regarding watershed changes, climate variability, and change was added
- 4) The recommendations and future work section was shortened.

John England noted that the USACE will be releasing an updated HEC-SSP soon that will include the updated techniques. An updated USGS PeakFQ has already been released.

Will Thomas has prepared a short summary/overview of the updates in Bulletin 17C. This will be the introductory element of the B17C website. A portion of this summary will be extracted to publish in the Federal Register for the public comment solicitation.

Robert Mason noted that the revised draft text had not been provided a full two weeks prior to the SOH meeting and asked if the members felt comfortable proceeding with consideration of it; there were no objections. He then asked if there were any objections to posting for public comment; there were no objections. Robert then asked if anyone would be to move that the report be posted for public comment. Tom Nicholson made the motion. Don Woodward seconded it. The motion carried.

#### 7. Tour of HFAWG "B17C" website

Andrea Veilleux presented how the USGS will publish the web page. As a key feature, it will include the overview written by Will Thomas. The website will include the appendices as well as links to cited reports. It will include a web form for public comment.

#### 8. Review of Action Items

Robert Mason will send out the link to the USGS peer-review agenda website, Federal register notice, and B17C website when they are ready. By the next meeting, there may be some public comments to discuss, although the comment period will still be underway at that time.

Bill Merkel will be retiring next week, so this was his last committee meeting. Robert Mason thanked him for his service to the committee and reported that on behalf of the committee, he had sent a letter to Bill's supervisor thank NRCS for letting Bill serve and provide such excellent, longstanding service.

#### 9. Adjourn Meeting.

Robert Mason thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting adjourned at 1:54 pm.

Attachment 1 – Conference call attendance

Participants (\* denotes Subcommittee member)

Robert Mason, USGS\*

Andrea Veilleux, USGS

Ben Pratt, National Hydrologic Warning Council\*

Brian Beucler, FHWA\*

Donald Woodward, Global Ecosystems Center\*

John England, USACE

Martin Becker, Defenders of Property Rights\*

Kevin Stewart, National Hydrologic Warning Council

Julie Kiang, USGS

Ed Tomlinson, Atmospheric Science Consultants

Ted Engram, NASA\*

Bill Merkel, NRCS\*

David Raff, Bureau of Reclamation\*

LySanias Broyles, USACE

David Goodrich, USDA\*

Chandra Pathak, USACE\*

Tom Nicholson, NRC\*

Siamak Esfandiary, FEMA\*

Jack Felbinger, Office of Surface Mining\*

Pravin Rana, EPA\*

David Sutley, FEMA

Ashley Knoll, STARR II/Atkins (for FEMA)

Laura Chap, STARR II/Atkins (for FEMA)

**Attachment 2 – Meeting Agenda**  
**CONFERENCE CALL FOR THE**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WATER INFORMATION (ACWI),**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON HYDROLOGY (SOH)**  
**1:00 p.m. – 2:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time**  
**Monday, December 21, 2015**

**Remote Instructions:**

1. Meeting Web-x  
<https://usgs.webex.com/usgs/j.php?MTID=ma8eea7efdaf52418fc00e573cda4db5>
2. Meeting number: 703-648-4848; code 20387

<b>I. Draft Agenda (<i>subject to SOH Approval</i>)</b>
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|---|------------------------|
| 1. <b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> (2 mins)  | Robert Mason           |
| 2. <b>Roll-Call (Remote Participants/In-Person Attendees)</b> (3-5 mins)                            | SOH Members and Guest. |
| 3. <b>Review and Approval of Agenda</b> (2 mins)  | Robert Mason           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to adopt agenda?</li> </ul>                         |                        |
| 4. <b>The SOH Communications Plan</b> (15 mins)   |                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview</li> </ul>  | <i>Robert Mason</i>    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions/Answers/Discussion</li> </ul>                    | <i>All</i>             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Motion to adopt the communications plan?</i></li> </ul> |                        |
| 5. <b>Nomination and Confirmation of Peer Reviewers</b> (15 mins)                                   |                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Overview</i></li> </ul>                                 | <i>Will Thomas</i>     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions/Answers/Discussion</li> </ul>                    | <i>All</i>             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Motion to confirm peer reviewers?</i></li> </ul>        |                        |
| 6. <b>B17C draft report</b> (15 mins)   |                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Overview</i></li> </ul>                                 | <i>Will Thomas</i>     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions/Answers/Discussion</li> </ul>                    | <i>All</i>             |
| 7. <b>Tour of HFAWG “B17C” website</b> (as time permits)  | Robert Mason           |
| 8. <b>Review of Action</b> (5 mins)   | Robert Mason           |
| 9. <b>Meeting To Adjourn</b> ( <i>Around 3:45 pm</i> )  |                        |