

Monitoring Challenges Teleconference 3 Dec 2012

Attendees:

Peter Evans, ICWP	Charlie Crawford	Robert Mason, USGS
Dave Carlton, ASFPM	Jeff Deacon, USGS	Mike Norris, USGS
Wendy Norton, USGS	Bill Werkheiser, USGS	Steven Heiskary, NALMS
Tom Leahy, AMWA	Chandra Pathak, COE	Nathan Bracken, WSWC
Judy Campbell Bird, ACWI-NLC	Doug McLaughlin, NCASI	Robert Mace, WSWC
Robert Goldstein, EPRI	Darrel Osterhoudt, ASDWA	Brandon Kernan, ASDWA
Kevin Dennehy, USGS	Marie Garsjo, NRC Ret.	John Wells, ACWI-SWRR
Sue Lowry, ICWP	Fred Bloetscher, AWWA	Pixie Hamilton, USGS
Bill Cunningham, USGS	John Gray, USGS	

Teleconference: The call-in number is 1-855-547-8255 (toll free); Access code: 60862

Agenda:

2:00 pm	Welcome, identify participants and opening remarks
2:10 pm	Proposed approach to facilitate the development of recommendations requested November 6, 2012 by the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Water and Science <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall schedule• Sequence of topics• Information development, presentation and documentation• Identification, evaluation and development of potential recommendations
2:25pm	Discussion and revision of the proposed approach
2:50pm	Summary of decisions and next steps
3:00pm	Adjourn

Action Items:

1. *Norton* – poll USGS network/program coordinators and ask for a list of links to materials that will give the workgroup some background on the USGS monitoring networks. Make sure the list of links get sent to the whole group by the end of the week. This list and documents will also be available by the end of this week or early next week on the ACWI website, which will have a page dedicated to this workgroup.
2. *Evenson* – Eric Evenson could possibly provide background on the draft document to the group at the next meeting, instead of waiting until February. Mason and Norton will check with Evenson to make sure this is feasible. (Done: Evenson is available to speak to the group earlier than scheduled, if needed; possibly on Jan 14.)
3. *Norton* – send meeting minutes from this teleconference, along with a revised schedule (from Evans).

Meeting notes:

Bill Werkheiser welcomed the group and noted that we now have a written plan, outlining the steps we need to take to accomplish our goal by the middle of next summer.

The Big Question: What is the Federal interest in our monitoring networks? If we have agreement on the answer to this question, it will be a big help to USGS. We have a good definition of "Federal interest" relative to streamgaging, but we need a better definition for our groundwater, water quality, and sediment networks.

Another Big Question: As we try to capitalize that Federal interest, what should be our priorities for funding distribution? What is the first thing we ought to fund, when we get a funding increase?

We have a proposed timeline for actions for this group, aimed at getting information to DOI by summer (see the end of these meeting minutes).

Our charge is to figure out a way to maintain the strength and integrity of the monitoring networks in a shrinking Federal budget climate. However, a shrinking Federal budget does not necessarily mean a shrinking budget for water monitoring. Our budget for monitoring is already only $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 percent of the amount that Congress appropriates for DOI, EPA, and Forest Service water programs.

Drivers – we need to identify users of the information we collect and develop a list of major uses for the data. How do we characterize the level of uncertainty that we can tolerate in each of these uses?

For future meetings, we should try to hold 20-30 minutes at the end of each meeting for discussion and deliberation.

What kind of recommendations would be the most useful? What are the uses supported by the science/data? Knowing the answer to that question will help us identify the Federal responsibility for the various applications, and thus will help us to set priorities.

If people have had a chance to look through the proposed framework/agenda/workplan, does anyone have comments? Are there other attributes of the networks that aren't reflected here, but that we need to discuss?

Lowry – how will we get a feel for what the current uses are, and how will we decide the relative merit of those uses? *Werkheiser* – we have a fair amount of documentation on what the current uses are (see NHWC document); we need this group to tell us whether we're missing anything big. *Mason* – we know the kinds of uses we (USGS) are putting the data to, and we know our primary user base, but we don't know all the specific uses that the community is putting the data to (NPDES, use by the DOTs, etc.). *Wells* – we should also think about future needs and future uses; some uses may be expanding, while others contract.

McLaughlin – in light of this conversation and the outline Peter has put together, would it be helpful for some of the people who are closest to these networks to point us toward recently written documents such as advisory panel reviews (for example, the recent NAWQA review). *Evans* – as we look at each of the networks, we'll ask USGS to point us toward the most recent reviews/documents that relate to each.

Evans – we would like to have PowerPoint presentations available on the website the Friday before the presentation is given to the group. The presentations could be annotated with speakers' notes, if desired.

Mason – there are groups around the country that are network coordination councils (West Virginia, for example), and these might be a better source than USGS to get information about independent uses of the data.

Wells – we can also define "uses" narrowly or broadly, so we might want to spend some time on defining what we mean by "use."

We have a clear list of uses for the NSIP plan gages; we do **not** have a comprehensive list of the uses for the non-NSIP streamgages, or for groundwater, water-quality, or sediment monitoring sites.

McLaughlin – I don't know much about the prioritization process for locating various gages, so I want to be sure that links or documentation on this issue are available. Almost no information you could provide to this group is too basic. Perhaps we need some detailed information, along with a summary (either verbally or in writing).

Evans – the NSIP design documents will give you good background on this; also, USGS and private sector participants went through a value-engineering study just a few years ago, which should also give you good background.

Evans outlined the schedule and asked for comments. *Wells* – we could also slice the pie by application/use instead of by user type.

Evans – are there other items we want to see on the website for source/reference/background material?

McLaughlin – is it possible to look at the USGS strategic directions document in January instead of February? Earlier seems better in this case. *Evans* – the draft is already available; we'll make sure you have a copy to study as soon as it's ready for public viewing. Note that the strategic directions document presumes that there are no budget constraints, however. We could start with that document on January 14 instead of waiting until February. But it might be useful to start with the individual network briefings before delving into the broader picture of strategic planning. The document is ready except for layout and printing, so maybe we want to ask USGS to provide the document to us next week, and wait to start the network-specific briefings in January.

What is the timeframe for upcoming meetings? Does 1:30pm eastern time work for most people?
Consensus says "yes!"

Proposed Outline for ACWI Constrained/Shrinking Budget Deliberation

November 28 Draft

Organization & Planning	Dec3
USGS Streamgauge/ Surface Water Networks	Dec10
Strategic Streamgages	
National purpose gages	
State, tribal & local cost-share gages	
DCPs, telemetry & Internet	
Quality assurance	
Standards & procedures	
Training (for USGS & others)	
Federal Appropriations & FTEs	Jan14
5yr perspective on investment in these USGS programs relative to overall federal budget for USGS, DOI, & Congressional allocation for DOI, EPA & USFS	
USGS Ground Water Networks	Jan14
Monitoring Networks	
Existing network	
Proposed network	
DCPs & telemetry	
Quality assurance	
Standards & procedures	
Training (for USGS & others)	
USGS Water Quality Networks	Jan28
Monitoring networks	
Existing network	
Proposed network	
Quality assurance	
Standards & procedures	
Training (for USGS & others)	
Strategic Directions for USGS Water Science, 2012-2022	Feb11
Summary of the priorities that USGS has identified for monitoring and related science	
“Related Science”	Feb25
Regional characterization	
CWP Interpretive Studies	
Major aquifer & other GW studies	
WQ studies	

“Related Science” (continued)	Mar11
Water Census	
Watershed budgets	
Flow & water level estimation for ungagged locations	
Ecological use estimation	
Human use estimates	
Other?	
R&D	Mar25
Data collection, DCPs, telemetry, satellites & Internet	
Models & interpretive tools	
Other	
Review, revise plans	Mar25
Needs Served by USGS Monitoring & Related Science	Apr8
Summary of DOI and OFA applications & tolerance for uncertainty	
Summary of state, tribal, local & interstate applications& tolerance for uncertainty	
Summary of private sector applications& tolerance for uncertainty	
Summary of NGO & other applications& tolerance for uncertainty	
 Characterization of Needs Served by USGS Monitoring & Related Science	Apr22
 Consideration of potential recommendations	Apr22
 Consideration of potential recommendations	May6
 Selection & prioritization of potential recommendations	May27
Consider need for documentation	
Consider comments on proposed recommendations	Jun10
 Agree on recommendations	Jun24