

**ACWI Workgroup on USGS Monitoring Challenges in a Shrinking Budget Environment
Teleconference
28 May 2013**

Attendees:

Peter Evans, ICWP	Sue Lowry, ICWP	John Wells, ACWI-SWRR
Wendy Norton, USGS	Chris Reimer, NGWA	Ben Pratt, SRBC
Steve Aichele, USGS	Mary Musick, GWPC	Judy Campbell Bird, ACWI-NLC
Marie Garsjo, USGS-SOS	Robert Mace, WSWC	
Doug McLaughlin, NCASI	Susan Kirsch	
Robert Schreiber, ASCE	Tony Willardson, WSWC	
Darrell Osterhoudt, ASDWA	Lee Koss, BLM	

Action Items:

- ACTION: Can we get more discussion/briefing for ACWI on how budget decisions get implemented at USGS? We need to understand how funds are allocated to Water Science Centers and other organizational units, once an appropriation has been made.
- ACTION: Everyone has the assignment to read all three options, plus the "Additional Thoughts" document, and come back to the next meeting with suggestions for integrating these things. Doug McLaughlin will take the lead on this but others are invited to help – perhaps we can have a small group get together to discuss this further. The workgroup will meet Monday, June 3 at 10:00 a.m.
- ACTION: Wendy will find the Water Mission Area mission statement and include it in these meeting minutes. (Complete – see end of meeting minutes)

Introductions and Agenda Review

- Peter Evans reviewed the agenda to start the meeting, along with plans for future meetings.

Revision/Acceptance of Notes from May 20 Meeting

- Minutes from last meeting were accepted/approved.

Review Budget Information Requested May 20

- Peter Evans walked the group through the budget table that was distributed last week (http://acwi.gov/monitoring-challenges_wkg/minutes/acwi_workgrp_budget-summary_23may_phe.pdf). Everyone seemed satisfied that they understood the numbers, once it was verbally clarified that the table represents only about half of the USGS water mission area budget (the half appropriated directly by Congress).

Review of Draft Outline for Workgroup Report & Ideas Provided from the Workgroup

Discussion of options 1-3 of the Guiding Principles document:

- Under Option 2, number 9 – are these really the most important science issues?
- We need to provide short-term and long-term recommendations, including recommendations that Anne can use right away during development of the 2015 budget.
- Can we provide the "additional thoughts" as well as the "guiding principles" since the "additional thoughts" gives some good tactical advice?
- On "additional thoughts" we need to expand number 5 to include water quantity, as well as water quality.
- **ACTION:** Can we get more discussion/briefing for ACWI on how budget decisions get implemented at USGS? We need to understand how funds are allocated to Water Science Centers and other organizational units, once an appropriation has been made.
- In developing our list of principles, we need to ensure that each one is really a principle and not a priority. Giving a lead-in/summary heading for each principle will help us in discussing those principles, and will also help us to ensure that they really ARE principles. See an example of this in "Guiding Principles Option 1."
- We need to make sure that Water Science Centers have the flexibility to do more or less data collection and more or less interpretive studies, depending on the needs of local cooperating agencies.
- We want to avoid the "slippery slope" of saying "cut everything else to preserve monitoring because that could result in a lot of bad management decisions being made, due to the lack of interpretive studies that help us to understand the raw data. We don't want to undermine USGS contributions to research, assessment, modeling, etc. We must make it clear that we can defer some of these activities (briefly), but we cannot eliminate them. In deferring activities, we should begin with those that (if delayed) will have the least impact on management decisions that need to be made.
- Someone mentioned that we're presuming the monitoring networks are already optimal, when that may not be the case; however, USGS probably doesn't have time to scrap their network designs and start over again by the end of this year. SOGW member mentioned the NGWMN and the fact that a holistic groundwater "network" could be established in the short term.
- Maybe one recommendation should be that USGS needs to reevaluate their goals in consultation with stakeholders. That has been done recently (NAWQA Cycle III review and recent Science Strategy process) but those exercises didn't consider budget constraints.
- Over the next week, we need to explore how the Principles "option 1, 2, and 3" fit into the "Additional Thoughts" document. Several people said that they really like the format of "Option 1."

- ACTION: Everyone has the assignment to read all three options, plus the "Additional Thoughts" document, and come back to the next meeting with suggestions for integrating these things. Doug McLaughlin will take the lead on this but others are invited to help – perhaps we can have a small group get together to discuss this further. **The workgroup will meet Monday, June 3 at 10:00 a.m.**
- We need to write some standard definitions and stick to them (and use them in our report), so we don't confuse monitoring, assessment, interpretive studies, research, science, etc.

ACTION: Wendy will find the Water Mission Area mission statement and include it in these meeting minutes. (see below)

USGS Water Mission Area, mission statement – To provide reliable, impartial, timely information that is needed to understand the Nation's water resources. WRD actively promotes the use of this information by decision makers to –

- Minimize the loss of life and property as a result of water-related natural hazards, such as floods, droughts, and land movement.
- Effectively manage ground-water and surface-water resources for domestic, agricultural, commercial, industrial, recreational, and ecological uses.
- Protect and enhance water resources for human health, aquatic health, and environmental quality.
- Contribute to wise physical and economic development of the Nation's resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Plans for Next Meetings

The next meetings for the whole workgroup are planned for **Monday, June 10**, and **Monday, June 24**, for 2 hours beginning at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

The small workgroup discussing the "Additional Thoughts" and "Guiding Principles Options" will meet Monday, June 3, at 10:00 a.m.