

**THE NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK FOR U.S.
COASTAL WATERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES:
RESULTS OF THE PILOT PHASE**

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ABSTRACT

The Pilot Phase of the National Water Quality Monitoring Network for U.S. Coastal Waters and their Tributaries (Network) was conducted during calendar year 2007. Representatives of monitoring organizations in Delaware Bay, San Francisco Bay, and Lake Michigan worked as volunteers to identify major management issues in their study area and how well those issues would be addressed by a fully-implemented Network. Each of the Pilot Studies conducted an inventory of ongoing monitoring and compared that to the National Design to identify gaps in monitoring. Data management and access were also considered as part of the gap analysis. The costs of both existing monitoring and that needed to fill gaps were estimated for each Pilot. An additional effort completed during the Pilot Phase, was refinement of the Network design for nutrients, contaminants, biology, wetlands, and atmospheric deposition. Phase III is proposed to undertake demonstration projects where placement of new instrumentation and field work may occur to fill gaps and test the design on the ground. Phase IV would move toward Nation-wide implementation.

The Network uses an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to address a broad range of water resources and management issues. When fully implemented, the Network will provide a comprehensive database and understanding on a regional and national scale of estuaries, coastal waters and beaches, the Great Lakes, tributary rivers, ground water, atmospheric deposition, and wetlands. The design was developed by 80 representatives of Federal, state, and local government agencies, universities, professional organizations, and the private sector coordinated by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council.

KEYWORDS

Monitoring design, estuaries, rivers, wetlands