



# National Water Quality Monitoring Council

Working together for clean water



## Meeting Minutes – National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) Web Meeting February 13, 2017

(Agenda and list of participants on pages 4-5, presentations posted on Council website at: <http://acwi.gov/monitoring/>)

### Actions, Decisions and other Information

1. **Decision:** Upon a motion duly made (Aaron Borisenko), seconded (Mike McDonald), and carried, the December, 2016 Council Meeting minutes were approved and will be posted on the website.
2. **Announcement:** Susan Holdsworth will update the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) on recent Council developments and future plans at the ACWI Annual Meeting on February 22 and 23, 2017. Jim Kreft will present the Strategic Plan for the Water Quality Portal at this meeting and ACWI will vote on approving this document.
3. **2018 National Monitoring Conference – Conference Planning Committee**
  - **Logistics for Conference:** Jeff Schloss updated the Council on final venue negotiations for the 2018 National Monitoring Conference. Jeff is working on contracting between two venues to make sure that risks and contingencies are covered in contracting. Albuquerque is still a possible venue with dates in the first week in May. Kansas City is also available the week of April 9-13.
    - **ACTION:** Jeff will update the Council when a final venue and time has been chosen.
    - **ACTION:** Any federal representatives with information about travel restrictions are encouraged to contact Jeff for more accurate planning.
  - Alice Mayo mentioned that the Conference Planning Process is already behind schedule since a venue hasn't been chosen and Save the Dates haven't been sent out. The Conference Planning Committee will investigate what can be done to shorten the planning timeline and still send out a Call for Abstracts in April.
4. **Collaboration and Outreach (C&O) Work Group** – Danielle Donkersloot and Candice Hopkins presented on recent outreach and collaboration activities. The C&O Work Group is actively working on updating the roster of state and regional monitoring councils; Susan Holdsworth suggested providing links to presentations from previous conferences as a resource to these groups. The group is close to finalizing posters to help advertise the NWQMC and the Water Quality Portal; these posters will be available by March.
  - Action:** Spring Newsletter deadline is March 3, 2017. Please encourage submission of articles by this date.
  - Action:** Presentations (how-tos) for state and regional monitoring councils will be linked to the C&O section of the NWQMC website.
5. **Training and Certification Subgroup:** Aaron Borisenko reviewed the Project Plan for the Certification and Training project. The first meeting of the group went well and the group is trying to have both a top down/bottom up vision. The group is working towards sending a survey to the NWQMC in June and present results in October. Development of trainings and certifications offered will move forward based on responses from surveys.
6. **Volunteer Monitoring Work Group:** Danielle Donkersloot and Julie Vastine updated the Council on recent Volunteer Monitoring Work Group activities. The co-chairs are working on updating the map of Volunteer Monitoring organizations. They are also recruiting articles for the newsletter.
7. **Methods Board and Sensors Work Group:** Dan Sullivan updated the Council on recent activities of the Methods Board. The Methods Board may participate in discussions about core metadata for the Water Quality Portal and NEMI and decide which metadata are critical and which are optional. The Sensors Workgroup has completed their questionnaire on interest in sensors

and related topics; they will distribute it to the Council; please help pass this along to others. This group is also looking at invasive species decontaminant procedures for sensors. The group is gathering information on species of concern that can be transferred through monitoring activities and will move on to experimentation and then make recommendations on cleaning protocols.

8. **Biological Comparability and Assessment Subgroup:** Dan Sullivan said that the group had their first kickoff call in February. They started filling in the project plan template with major tasks including gap assessment, identifying opportunities for finding comparability, and developing reporting elements and guidelines for reporting data. Potential products may include inventories, listings, and fact sheets.
9. **National Network of Reference Watersheds (NNRW):** Mike McHale is working to get the NNRW group on a regular meeting schedule. The NNRW group will look at how to utilize new tools, such as R tools and the data discovery tool, to interpret water-quality data from reference watersheds. Mike is currently working with a web developer to make data input to the NNRW easier for users. In addition, Mike is planning to meet with the EPA Regional Monitoring Network coordinators to discuss calculating watershed characteristics.
10. **Water Information Strategies (WIS) Work Group—**Mary Skopec and Aaron Borisenko presented on activities and deliverables for the WIS group. WIS is trying to make progress to finalize fact sheets and get them posted to the web. They plan to work with C&O to get these fact sheets promoted. Five of these fact sheets are ready to go and need to be moved to the website. Aaron is also planning to write a newsletter article to advertise these fact sheets.
11. **Water Quality Standards Subgroup:** Chris Greene and Monty Porter presented on Water Quality Standards Subgroup that will be meeting in the near future. They hope to conduct an inventory of water quality standards across the country and eventually develop a white paper on the topic of water quality standards. Chris has started on this outline and will present more information at the April 10 NWQMC meeting.
12. **Water Quality Portal Metadata Standards Subgroup:** Jeff Thomas and Dan Sullivan presented on progress that they have recently made with Laura Shumway and the Water Quality Exchange (WQX) team. The WQX team already has several subgroups that are active, one of which is addressing metadata issues. This subgroup may choose to merge with the WQX team's subgroup and help with training and educational opportunities to help people understand the appropriate metadata to include in data uploads. Several NWQMC members voiced support for the Council taking a more active role in pushing out metadata standards in a more concerted way. Additional conversations will take place between this group, C&O, and the WQX team about how the Council can help this effort.
13. **Evaluate Progress Subgroup:** Mike Higgins and Leslie McGeorge have not yet found a time for the Evaluate Progress Subgroup to meet. They will try to find a time to meet and plan to discuss success stories and metrics for success. They hope to use a matrix approach to evaluate Council products and activities versus Council functions.
14. **Federal Representative Round Robin**  
Federal representatives gave short updates on news and developments from their agencies.
  - Gary Rowe presented updates for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); he mentioned that National Water-Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA) is getting ready to release a trends analysis for streams. The next set of regional stream assessments is going to be the California Coastal Basins, and sampling work will take place this summer. A NAWQA Liaison Committee will meet in Washington D.C. on March 31, 2017 to give an overview of surface water activities.
  - Marie DeLorenzo presented updates for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); there are newly identified priorities at the National Ocean Service level that are aligned with the Department of Commerce priorities.
  - Pete Penoyer presented updates from the National Park Service (NPS); the current NPS database is currently being updated to include continuous data through Aquarius. NPS is working with USGS to upgrade training for monitoring

professionals working on networks across several parks. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working with NPS to collect about 30 samples per month for emerging contaminants.

- Susan Holdsworth presented updates for the EPA; the EPA is continuing work on algal blooms and algal toxins throughout the country. EPA is assisting with implementation of nutrient thresholds to address algal blooms.
- Mike Higgins presented updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); there is currently a water resources assessment effort that inventories water resources as well as threats and needs in wildlife refuges. Between 350 and 400 refuges have threats or needs that are related to water resources; commonly these threats include nutrient pollution and needs that have been identified are plans for nutrient mitigation. Last year a water quality pilot study was conducted in the Northeast Region; the USFWS is starting to adopt monitoring protocols and expand these throughout the region and across the country. USFWS is also trying to adopt rules and guidelines for oil and gas development on refuges and are trying to follow rules similar to those in place at NPS.
- Jeff Thomas presented updates for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in place of Erich Emery. USACE is currently in discussions with USGS and EPA about getting data shared in the Water Quality Portal within the next several years.

#### 15. Technical Presentation

- Nancy Stoner of the Pisces Foundation presented conclusions from a national survey of low-cost water quality monitoring (see presentation "[WQMS-Summary for Water Quality Monitoring Council 2.6.17](#)"). The presentation highlighted findings from a study that aimed to better understand gaps between what monitoring groups were currently doing and what they hoped to achieve. Many respondents believe widespread availability of low-cost equipment could affect major improvements in water quality. Another major conclusion from this study is that many monitoring groups lack knowledge of beneficial low-cost data access and sharing technologies that could greatly benefit their programs.

## MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 13, 2017

11:00 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Candice Hopkins
11:15 AM	Council Business: Approve of December 2016 minutes	Candice Hopkins
11:20 AM	Collaboration and Outreach Update Training and Certification Subgroup	Candice Hopkins and Danielle Donkersloot Aaron Borisenko
12:05 PM	Volunteer Monitoring Update	Danielle Donkersloot and Julie Vastine
12:15 PM	Round Robin Updates	Federal Representatives
12:25 PM	NNRW Updates	Mike McHale
12:40 PM	Sensors and Methods Board Updates	Dan Sullivan
1:00 PM	<b>BREAK</b>	
1:15 PM	Water Information Strategies Update WQP Metadata/Data Quality Evaluate Progress Water Quality Standards	Mary Skopec and Aaron Borisenko Dan Sullivan and Jeff Thomas Mike Higgins and Leslie McGeorge Chris Greene and Monty Porter
2:10 PM	2018 Conference Update	Jeff Schloss and Alice Mayo
2:30 PM	Low Cost Water Quality Monitoring Survey	Nancy Stoner, Pisces Foundation
3:00 PM	Adjourn for Day	Gary Rowe

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