



# National Water Quality Monitoring Council

Working together for clean water



## Meeting Minutes – National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) Web Meeting July 8, 2019

(Agenda and attendance on pages 2-4, presentations posted on Council website at: <http://acwi.gov/monitoring/>)

### Actions, Decisions and other Information

1. Upon a motion duly made (Julie Vastine), seconded (Larry Willis), and carried, the May 2019 Council Meeting minutes were approved and will be posted on the website.
2. **Membership Update:** Gary Rowe announced that Jeff Adams of Campbell Scientific will serve as the Industry Representative on the Council moving forward. James Beckley of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is now the Volunteer Monitoring Work Group Co-Chair and Volunteer Monitoring Alternate. Kristen (Kris) McSwain is the new Designated Federal Official for the Advisory Committee on Water Information.
  - **Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) update:** Gary Rowe reported on a new [executive order](#) to evaluate and improve the utility of Federal Advisory Committees. Existing committees are being evaluated, including ACWI, the parent Federal Advisory Committee to the NWQMC. Gary, Kris, and others have been asked to provide information on the Council as part of a write-up that they are submitting to DOI on the work of ACWI and subcommittees.
  - Another executive order (will be issued today) regarding the Water Subcabinet. This order formalizes the Water Subcabinet as Water Policy Committee (WPC); this newly-formed committee will help to direct bureaus and agencies about water priorities.
3. **National Monitoring Conference (NMC) Date and Time Selection:** Jeff Schloss reported out on the need to identify dates and times for the next National Monitoring Conference. The Council had voted in November of 2018 to hold the next NMC in Spring of 2022, but we also need to incorporate feedback from the 2019 NMC survey. 42% of respondents reported a preference for 2021, 15% a preference for 2022, and 43% had no preference at all. Jeff also mentioned the upcoming Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting (JASM) is planned for May of 2022 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, so it may affect attendance at the NMC if it is held in the same year. In order to assess the Council's preference for timing and location of the next NMC, the Conference Planning Committee put together a poll and is asking that Council members complete it by July 12, 2019.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** All Council members are encouraged to complete [this survey](#) by July 12, 2019.
4. **Water Information Strategies (WIS) Work Group Update:** Aaron Borisenko reported on updates from the WIS Work Group. Mike Higgins and Leslie McGeorge sent out an Evaluating Progress matrix earlier in the month; Aaron was not sure who received this matrix and will double-check all Council members are able to review it. Lori Sprague is winding down the Interagency Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting workgroups and is writing a white paper; she's looking for feedback from the groups by July 17<sup>th</sup> and will attend the September 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. WIS reviewed the fact sheet list and haven't made significant progress on generating new fact sheets.
5. **Volunteer Monitoring (VM) Work Group Update:** Julie Vastine and James Beckley gave an overview of recent updates from the Volunteer Monitoring Work Group (see presentation "[Council VM Work Group 7.8.19](#)"). The work group recently added several new members and has a new co-chair. They are focusing on lining up new webinars and recruiting newsletter articles to help with outreach. The work group is also working on a fact sheet on the Value of Volunteer Monitoring and will be working on efforts to improve content on the VM page of the Council's website.

6. **Biological Comparability and Assessment Work Group Update:** Jesse Boorman-Padgett gave an update on workgroup efforts. The Biological Comparability and Assessment Work Group had a kickoff meeting in March at the 2019 National Monitoring Conference; this group was formed from people at meeting from a mixed group of agencies. So far, they have had 4 calls through end of June and calls have focused on what biological collection methods need added to WQX NEMI. The Work Group hopes to provide guidance on how to submit macroinvertebrate data to WQX and registering biological collection methods in NEMI. The next step is to compare added fields to WQX 2.0 to maximize backwards comparability.
7. **Methods Board Update:** Dan Sullivan updated the group on the Methods Board via email. There have been many updates to NEMI recently, but changes have not been made live to the website yet. There are now a total of 110 biological methods in the database, and more will be added soon. The Sensors Work Group has been on a hiatus since before the 2019 NMC and are awaiting input for future work.
8. **Collaboration and Outreach Work Group Update:** Candice Hopkins presented on recent efforts of the Collaboration and Outreach work group. The group has hosted several webinars, and now webinars will be on hiatus during the field season until September 5<sup>th</sup>. The group will also be working on the Fall newsletter; the call for articles was sent in mid-June and articles are due by August 15<sup>th</sup> to [NationalMonitoringCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:NationalMonitoringCouncil@gmail.com).
9. **Technical Presentation:** Hartwig Kremer (United Nations, UN) gave a presentation on the World Water Quality Alliance (see presentation "[WWQA Inception and Use Cases – Status- US- Water Council 08-07\\_2019](#)"). The World Water Quality alliance is a voluntary group of agencies that works with the UN in the co-design of the process on water; this group helps promote the UN Environment Freshwater Strategy to help countries achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been set by the UN. The UN issued a snapshot report on water quality in 2016, which identified many issues which the Council is familiar with: data and information gaps, a lack of regional monitoring stations, and consistent inconsistencies between global and regional knowledge and assessment. The report also recognized that new data sources such as citizen science and remote sensing can help fill some data gaps. A mandate of the program is the Global Environment Monitoring System for Freshwater (GEMS/Water) and provides guidelines for helping to achieve SDGs; the GEMS is a global database and monitoring network that helps countries calculate their progress in SDGs. GEMS is being supported by funding from Germany and Ireland, and training courses are provided by a university in Ireland. The World Water Quality Alliance is preparing for the next global water quality meeting (held September 2019) and more agencies are wanting to join and contribute modeling work. The World Water Quality Alliance is trying to bring capable partners together to identify key issues of water quality that need to be addressed and raise resources to address these issues.
10. **Technical Presentation:** Margaret McCauley (EPA) gave a presentation on trash assessment methods (see presentation "[NWQMC McCauley July 2019](#)"). Currently, there is a lot of interest in assessing trash in waters, but there is a lack of consistency between trash monitoring protocols and platforms for sharing data. EPA is interested in figuring out what to track and how to combine trash assessment information with other data. Margaret would like to use more peers on the clean water act side in developing a strategy going forward. She will connect with the Methods Board in future months to determine if there are potential collaborative efforts the Council can help with.

## MEETING AGENDA

Monday July 8th, 2019

Time (EDT)	Topic	Speaker
11:00 AM	Introductions	Susan Holdsworth and Gary Rowe
11:10 AM	Approval of May 2019 NWQMC Minutes	Candice Hopkins
11:15 AM	UN GEMS Programme Presentation	Hartwig Kremer
12:00 PM	Update from National Monitoring Conference Planning Committee	Jeff Schloss, Sara Peel, Julie Vastine
12:20 PM	EPA's Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol; complexities and conundrums	Margaret McCauley, EPA Region 10
12:40 PM	<b>Break</b>	

12:50 PM	WIS Update	Mary Skopec, Aaron Borisenko
1:05 PM	Volunteer Monitoring Update	Julie Vastine, James Beckley
1:20 PM	Collaboration and Outreach Update	Candice Hopkins
1:30 PM	Methods Board and Sensors Work Group Update	Dan Sullivan
1:40 PM	National Network of Reference Watersheds Update	Mike McHale
1:55 PM	Adjourn	Susan Holdsworth and Gary Rowe

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