



National Water Quality Monitoring Council

Working together for clean water



Meeting Minutes – National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC) Web Meeting April 9, 2018

(Agenda and list of participants on pages 3-4, 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 (Jim Dorsch), and carried, the February 2018 NWQMC Web Meeting minutes were approved and will be posted to the website.
2. **National Monitoring Conference:** Jeff Schloss has been working on finalizing contracting for the 2019 NMC, which is expected to be held March 25-29, 2019 at the Sheraton Downtown Denver. The NMC has been hosted at this venue before (in 2004), and we will likely use a different event space at the Sheraton from what was used in 2004. With our current size estimates, we will be able to hold seven concurrent sessions with three trainings or workshops. Jeff is working to negotiate for internet throughout the venue which would be useful for trainings. Conference Planning Committee (CPC) meetings have been going well, and all lead positions are filled now. The Program Committee has finalized major themes for the meeting, and these will be sent out in the Save the Date and Call for Abstracts. The CPC is also looking for a new way to review and organize abstracts since it is likely the NWQMC will not be meeting in person this year (see presentation "[NMC CPC Update 180409](#)").
 - Action: NWQMC members send Jeff Schloss feedback on any Conference Apps you may have used in the past
 - Action: NWQMC members send suggestions for plenary speakers to Dan Sullivan.
3. **Collaboration and Outreach (C&O) Work Group** –Candice Hopkins presented on outreach and collaboration activities. The webinar series is going well; there are another three webinars scheduled through May and we continue to have several hundred people attend our webinar live. C&O has had very positive feedback about hosting recorded webinars on our YouTube channel and continue to see growth in our subscriber audience. The C&O group recently helped edit articles for the Spring 2018 National Monitoring News, which is currently in layout and they hope to send out the newsletter sometime in April 2018.
4. **Volunteer Monitoring (VM) Work Group:** Barb Horn gave updates for the VM work group; the group has been regularly meeting, and hosted a webinar on bacteria monitoring and encouraged submissions to the Spring 2018 Newsletter. Parallel to these efforts, a few leaders from the VM Work Group have been involved with conversations with the Pisces Foundation about getting more VM data into the Water Quality Portal (Portal). As of now, they are focusing on two "camps" of data providers, those who aren't ready to share data and need assistance with database issues, and those that are ready to share data. There's a core group of people working on this issue with a variety of experiences. The group plans to run a demonstration at River Rally and then start working with data providers in June. The goal would be to help VM groups go from study design to action and evaluation with the help of a service center associated with a data hub.
5. **Methods and Data Comparability Board:** Dan Sullivan updated the Council on recent efforts of the Methods and Data Comparability Board (see presentation "[MDCB Update 9 Apr.2018 Webmeeting](#)"). Work efforts of the Biological Assessment and Comparability Workgroup include updating the National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI) with fields that are pertinent to biological methods, which is a produce of both recent Council work and work done by others in the past. This group is going to continue to meet to refine data elements and get outside review of these fields. The Sensors Workgroup has focused on helping to organize webinars on a variety of topics (the first of which will be held on April 20th) and trying to address uncertainty with various instruments. There has been a lot of interest in the uncertainty topic, especially from NOAA and USGS and Dan anticipates there will be more interest in the future.
6. **National Network of Reference Watersheds (NNRW):** Mike McHale reported on trying to reconstitute the NNRW working group and has a few people of agreed to serve. Mike is trying to recruit additional members, including one from BLM who recently wrote

a paper on reference watersheds in the Pacific Northwest. The website has been progressing as well; recently the connection between the WQP and NNRW was fixed, and the development team is working out some issues with this connection and making changes to an upload template. There was some concern expressed about getting biological data into NNRW, especially habitat data.

7. **Water Information Strategies (WIS) Work Group**—Mary Skopec and Aaron Borisenko covered a variety of topics related to the WIS work group. The WIS fact sheets are coming along and Aaron shared a document that is tracking the progress of the documents. The next fact sheet to be released will focus on the Water Quality portal, and WIS continues to seek help from Council members to push out fact sheets. The Evaluating Progress Subgroup has been making progress and plans to have a call in April. The Increasing Portal Submissions Subgroup has had some meetings and has been in conversation with many outside parties about how to increase submissions to the Water Quality Portal. The Water Quality Standards Subgroup is close to pushing out an early fact sheet on water quality standards. WIS is also working on getting state contacts from all regions; they have asked EPA regional representatives to help compile a list of contacts within their region to help evaluate use of the Water Quality Portal and stimulate opportunities at the regional level.
8. **Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting** – Lori Sprague gave a presentation on current efforts and future possibilities for increased coordination of water-quality monitoring and reporting (see presentation “[WQ Coordination Briefing](#)” and document “[Coordinated water-quality monitoring and reporting](#)”). In December 2017, there was an interagency meeting held to discuss three main challenges to water-quality data: 1) data access and discoverability, 2) metadata gaps and inconsistencies, and 3) data coverage. The group agreed that coordination can help reduce redundancy, preserve coverage in space or time, and add value to the data by using it beyond the life of the original project. Lori’s presentation covered past efforts to coordinate on this topic, and barriers to coordination as identified by the Heinz Center. A new effort will focus on 1) consistency in data discoverability, 2) consistency in data reporting quality, and 3) consistency in data collection. Work groups will be formed for each goal, and NWQMC members were asked to participate in this effort.

Following Lori’s presentation, the NWQMC had a discussion about this new effort. Leslie McGeorge asked how the NWQMC could help with this effort without burdening the Council with another task. Gary Rowe suggested that the work groups move forward and that the NWQMC help to promote and push out guidance to stakeholders through various venues. There was some pushback among NWQMC members that as described, the proposed effort fell within the purview of the Council and therefore the Council should have a lead role in developing recommendations for coordinated water-quality monitoring and reporting and promoting them to Council stakeholders. It was agreed that Gary and Susan would follow up with Lori to discuss this approach.

It was also suggested that some of the state representatives on the NWQMC participate in work groups to ensure there is a state perspective in conversations. If state representatives routinely reported back on these activities, the NWQMC could help the group move forward and be engaged in the effort. Doug McLaughlin suggested bringing this topic to the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) at the next annual meeting to get official endorsement of NWQMC participation in these efforts.

- Action item: Identify NWQMC members who could serve as co-chairs and/or participate on the work groups addressing the three work groups.
- Action Item: Gary Rowe and Susan Holdsworth will contact Lori about the NWQMC taking on a lead role in the coordinated water quality monitoring and reporting effort.

MEETING AGENDA

Monday, April 9, 2018

| Time (EDT) | Topic | Speaker |
|------------|--|--|
| 11:30 AM | Welcome and Introductions | Susan Holdsworth and Gary Rowe |
| 11:35 AM | Council Business: Approve of February 2018 minutes | Candice Hopkins |
| 11:40 AM | WIS Work Group Updates | Mary Skopec, Aaron Borisenko, and Subgroup Leads |
| 12:00 PM | National Network of Reference Watersheds Update | Mike McHale, via email |
| 12:05 PM | 2018 National Monitoring Conference Update | Jeff Schloss, Tim Oden, Lariena Guenzel, Marie DeLorenzo |
| 12:50 PM | Break | |
| 1:05 PM | MDCB: Sensors and Bioassessment Workgroup Updates | Dan Sullivan |
| 1:25 PM | Volunteer Monitoring Work Group Update | Danielle Donkersloot, Julie Vastine |
| 1:45 PM | Collaboration and Outreach Work Group Update | Candice Hopkins, Danielle Donkersloot |
| 2:00 PM | Coordinated WQ Monitoring and Reporting | Lori Sprague |
| 3:00 PM | Adjourn | Susan Holdsworth and Gary Rowe |

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