



# National Water Quality Monitoring Council

Working together for clean water



## Meeting Minutes – National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) Web Meeting April 10, 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 (Amy Kathman), seconded (Dave Chestnut), and carried, the February, 2017 Council Web Meeting minutes were approved and will be posted to the website.
2. **2018 National Monitoring Conference (NMC) – Conference Planning Committee**
  - Logistics for Conference: Jeff Schloss is working on contracting a venue for the conference. The likely venue is Kansas City the week of April 9-13, 2018.
    - o ACTION: Jeff will update the Council on the final venue and time.
  - Alice Mayo mentioned that the Conference Planning Committee (CPC) put together a Call for Topics that will be sent to our distribution list when the venue and dates have been finalized. Due to the delay in finding a venue, CPC will be working to compress the schedule for conference planning. EPA NARS will also be hosting their meeting in conjunction with the 2018 NMC and will likely need a day and a half for NARS-related meetings.
3. **Collaboration and Outreach (C&O) Work Group** – Candice Hopkins presented on recent outreach and collaboration activities (see presentation “C&O\_Apr17”). The C&O Work Group is actively working on updating the state and regional monitoring councils’ webpage. Julie Vastine has a student working with C&O on pulling together information from multiple locations on our website and helping to simplify the messaging and wording on the webpage. The group recently finalized two posters for NWQMC outreach activities. They can be mailed to Council members, or, members can download them from the [webpage](#). Several webinars are scheduled for the next months. The Spring 2017 Newsletter is in layout and will be finalized soon.  
**Action:** C&O will finalize a NWQMC PowerPoint presentation intended for outreach activities.
4. **Training and Certification Subgroup:** Aaron Borisenko reviewed the Project Plan for the Certification and Training project. The group is ahead of schedule and plans to send a survey out to NWQMC members in the next few weeks. Aaron gave an overview of the survey and stated that the audience of the training and certification program will be new hires or staff fresh out of school. Results from the survey will be presented at the October 9<sup>th</sup> NWQMC Web Meeting.
5. **National Assessment Subgroup:** Susan Holdsworth led the conversation for this subgroup since Larry Willis, the group lead, has been busy with other duties. Susan believes there are great opportunities to use recent publications to tell the National Assessment story through nutrient trends. New EPA and USGS reports can help frame nutrient issues at a national scale (such as increasing phosphorous nationwide). The next step for this subgroup is to develop a project plan and identify a lead.  
**Action:** Susan Holdsworth will follow up with Larry Willis about the next steps for this group.
6. **Volunteer Monitoring (VM) Work Group:** Julie Vastine updated the Council on recent Volunteer Monitoring Work Group activities. There is going to be a Citizen Science conference in May and a small group of people from the VM community will be there representing water quality activities. The VM work group is in conversations with representatives from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to think of new ways to fund diverse work. There is a VM webinar on April 13<sup>th</sup>, and Julie is working to line up additional webinar speakers for the next several months. Several subgroups of VM are working on topics such as adding VM data to the Water Quality Portal (WQP), compiling VM success stories, and clarifying protocols for VM cyanobacteria monitoring. In addition, Julie highlighted the success of South Carolina launching the Adopt-a-Stream program, which will likely be up and running by May 1<sup>st</sup>. This success story started a conversation about the importance of providing common documents (such as QAPPs and guidance manuals) for new VM groups.

7. **Methods Board and Sensors Work Group:** Dan Sullivan updated the Council on recent activities of the Sensors Work Group and Methods Board (see [presentation "Methods Board Apr.2017 Update"](#)). The Sensors Work Group is currently working on developing protocol for decontamination procedures of sensors. USGS has recently started an effort to put together national guidance on this topic, and the Work Group will continue discussions on this issue. The group also sent out a poll about sensor use and Dan is currently compiling results; he will report his findings to the work group at a future meeting. NEMI is still active and new biological protocols are currently being added to the database.
8. **Biological Comparability and Assessment Subgroup:** Dan Sullivan reported that the group is working on a large number of issues with members from the EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX) team and the USGS NWIS database administrators. Discussions have centered on issues with getting more biological database into both NWIS and WQX.
9. **National Network of Reference Watersheds (NNRW):** Mike McHale is going to start working on the communication portion of the NNRW sometime in the next several months. The Work Group has had a hard time meeting and Mike is going to attempt to try different methods for working with members. Many of the current NNRW sites need to have location information hidden from the public and Mike has been working on that effort. Mike has also been working on producing a summary of water-quality data at NNRW sites and communicating with Lori Sprague about potential methods. Mike has also been in touch with Helen Amos of EPA who is focusing on nutrient issues nationwide; he will attend a NADP meeting in April to share information about the NNRW to meeting attendees.
10. **Water Information Strategies (WIS) Work Group**—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. WIS is also working with the Water Quality Portal team after ACWI approved of the Strategic Plan at the February, 2017 meeting. The group is helping to revise the Memorandum of Understanding between USGS and EPA, and is working on fine tuning fact sheets for new users and data analysis tools.
11. **Water Quality Standards Subgroup:** Chris Greene presented on Water Quality Standards Subgroup that will be meeting in the near future. The group is hoping to conduct a survey of the states and figure out what standards already exist. They will be working with EPA's existing roster of standards and hope to produce a whitepaper for the NWQMC website about various types of guidance that exist.
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 (WQX) team. The group is working with the WQX team on three main topics: how to better submit flow data, how to unambiguously capture metals data, and examining how metadata fields have been used historically. Susan Holdsworth suggested that the group also focus on how to communicate more clearly with the WQX team and be sure to report back to the NWQMC.
13. **Evaluate Progress Subgroup:** Mike Higgins reported that the Work Group is working on the ranking matrix. They hope to figure out a way to score the metrics of this matrix so that the accomplishments of the NWQMC can be highlighted. This group is planning to start working with other work groups on filling in the matrix soon.
14. **Increasing Data Submission Subgroup:** Jane Caffrey said the group has had conference calls and they are working with the Water Quality Portal team to enhance their efforts. They are helping Laura Shumway to develop clear scripts for demonstration videos she will be making for a training in May. In addition, this group will be working the Collaboration and Outreach work group in coming months to increase messaging about data submission.
15. **NWQMC Member Round Robin**  
NWQMC representatives gave short updates on news and developments from their organizations.
  - Jane Caffrey reported that the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) had their international meeting in Hawaii in February. ALSO is also working with volunteer monitoring groups and RESTORE funding in the Gulf of Mexico.

- Chris Greene reported that there has been increased interest in per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) recently since they are soluble in blood and water, and they are bioaccumulative. Many public health groups are working to integrate and assess recently released guidance from the EPA that recommends a limit of 0.07 ug/L for these substances.
- Doug McLaughlin has been recently working on Bayesian network models that can take existing data and perform stress response modeling to better characterize multivariate relationships. This work has brought to light the importance of knowing the quality of data being used, and the importance of good metadata so that data can be able to have a secondary use.
- Jeff Thomas said that due to rising expenses and flat revenues, ORSANCO has been in the process of re-evaluating all of its programs through a 5-year forecast. Other interstate basin commissions have slightly better financial outlooks due in part to their ability to collect fees for water withdrawals and other activities. Recent activities of the commission have centered on learning more about the 700 mile long Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) that occurred on the Ohio River in 2015, including developing a better response plan, and determining the factors that caused it to occur then, but not again in 2016. In related work that was initiated a year prior to the HAB, ORSANCO has been collecting nutrients and chlorophyll data alongside macroinvertebrate samples and continuous DO measurements in an effort to explore the associations between nutrients and biological communities. Other recent efforts have focused on evaluating mercury in the Ohio River and include sampling to determine inputs to the river from major tributaries, calculating bioaccumulation factors for the river, estimating the total inputs to the river from direct point sources through NPDES permits, and determining the total load of mercury and methylmercury leaving the system.
- Rich McKenzie is currently serving as the National Watershed Program Lead and is trying to promote Forest Service's Strategic Plan for watershed-scale research and development.
- Nancy Schuldt recently attended a Tribal Environmental Planning Meeting that included a one-day mercury networking session. In addition, Nancy has been involved with activities with the EPA Exchange Network looking at water quality in relation to wild rice and tree stand density over time.

#### 16. Technical Presentation

- Helen Amos of the EPA presented a summary of a recent workshop on Water Quality – Atmospheric Deposition Integrated Monitoring for Nutrients ([see presentation "20170407\\_WIAM\\_workshop\\_summary\\_NWQMC"](#)). The workshop pulled together experts to frame a vision for better integration of atmospheric deposition and water-quality monitoring for nitrogen and phosphorous. This meeting acknowledge the importance of monitoring atmospheric deposition, the need to develop nationally consistent sampling protocols, and the need to improve linkages between deposition and water quality. The next meeting will be held in Louisville, KY on April 24, 2017.

## MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 13, 2017

11:00 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Susan Holdsworth and Gary Rowe
11:05 AM	Council Business: Approve of February 2017 minutes	Candice Hopkins
11:10 AM	Overview of Meeting and Project Templates	Candice Hopkins
11:15 AM	<b>Collaboration and Outreach</b> Training and Certification Subgroup National Assessment Subgroup	Candice Hopkins and Danielle Donkersloot Aaron Borisenko Larry Willis
11:50 AM	<b>Volunteer Monitoring</b>	Danielle Donkersloot and Julie Vastine
12:10 PM	<b>NNRW</b>	Mike McHale
12:25 PM	<b>Sensors and Methods Board</b> Biological Assessment and Comparability Subgroup	Dan Sullivan
12:45 PM	<b>BREAK</b>	BREAK
1:00 PM	<b>Water Information Strategies</b> WQP Metadata/Data Quality Increasing Submission to WQP Subgroup Evaluate Progress Water Quality Standards	Mary Skopec and Aaron Borisenko Dan Sullivan and Jeff Thomas Jane Caffrey Mike Higgins and Leslie McGeorge Chris Greene and Monty Porter
1:55 PM	2018 Conference Venue Update	Jeff Schloss, Alice Mayo
2:10 PM	Round Robin Updates: "Other" representatives	Jane Caffrey, Chris Greene, Doug McLaughlin, Amy Kathman, and Jeff Thomas
2:30 PM	Technical Speaker: Summary of Integrated Deposition/Water Quality Monitoring Workshop	Helen Amos and Denice Shaw, EPA

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