

Meeting Notes – August, 2007 – Drinking Water Liaison Meeting

Attendees (non-USGS):

Steve Via, Regulatory Affairs Manager, AWWA
Darrell Osterhoudt, Regulatory Affairs Manager, ASDWA
Christine Negra, Research Associate, Heinz Center
Nancy Stoner, Senior Attorney, Clean Water Project, NRDC
Mae Wu, Attorney, NRDC
Dawn Kristof Champney, President, WWEMA
Ed Hopkins, Director, Environmental Quality Program, Sierra Club
Chris Hornback, Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs, NACWA
Cynthia Finley, Director, Regulatory Affairs, NACWA
Erica Michaels Brown, Director, Regulatory Affairs, AMWA
Cartier Esham, VP and Director of Research, DUTKO Worldwide
Tim Williams, Managing Director of Govt. Affairs, WEF
Sharon Thomas, Manager of Regulatory Affairs, WEF
Jon Pawlow, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Dan Olson, EPA, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
Holly Green, EPA
Betsy Behl, EPA, Office of Pesticide Programs
Mike Muse, EPA, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
Nausheen Saeed, NACCHO
Judy Campbell Bird, USGS Contractor for Communications Support

Attendees (USGS)

Donna Myers, Chief, National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program
Carise Barbour, NAWQA
Gary Rowe, NAWQA
John Zogorski, NAWQA
Greg Delzer, NAWQA
Sandy Eberts, NAWQA
Pixie Hamilton, NAWQA
Tracy Hancock, NAWQA
Mike Focazio, Toxic Substances Hydrology Program
Toni Johnson, Advisory Council on Water Information/USGS Office of Water Information

Input/Recommendations from the NAWQA National Liaison Committee, August 16, 2007 on NAWQA Source-Water Quality Issues/Directions

1. Continue to work with the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water on communication of findings from the Source-Water Quality Assessments and their possible relevance and applications to EPA decision making and priorities, such as related to the CCL3.

- Action item: Greg Delzer and John Zogorski will contact Dan Olsen and Tom Carpenter to set up a meeting with EPA staff (for Fall/Winter 2007) to discuss findings from the first round of surface-water and ground-water source-water quality assessments.
- Action item: Greg Delzer will provide data from the first round of assessments to Dan Olsen (September 2007).

2. Inform EPA Superfund programs of findings on transport and processes controlling movement of contaminants in different aquifer systems.

- Action item: Sandy Eberts will include EPA contacts in the Superfund Program in meetings and disseminating reports and information relating to the movement of contaminants to wells.

3. Connect scientific findings to policy, regulatory, planning, and management decisions. Reach key audiences with information on planning of activities as well as findings. This will be done through written communications, meetings, and person to person communication, including with utilities, State

agencies (planning as well as water management), and localities (land-use planning and water management).

- Action item: NAWQA recognizes the needs of the “on-the-ground” users of the information at the local and State scales, and will continue to creatively enhance communication and information dissemination to address their needs. To this end, NAWQA requests that Liaison participants continue to provide NAWQA with specific recommendations to reach their members and local, state, and regional affiliates.

4. Maintain consistency with EPA drinking-water and aquatic-life benchmarks.

- Action item: NAWQA will continue to work with EPA on the development, use, and communication of Health-Based Screening Levels (HBSLs) in order to maintain consistency with EPA methodology, goals, and up-to-date toxicity information, as begun in 1998.
- Action item: NAWQA will implement its HBSL communication plan, developed in concert with a subset of stakeholders from the National Liaison Committee in August 2006, to enhance communication of water-quality findings in a human-health context.
- Action item: The USGS 2007 Science Strategy entitled “Facing Tomorrow’s Challenges-U.S. Geological Survey Science in the Decade 2007-2017” <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/2007/1309/pdf/C1309.pdf> highlights human health as one of its six 10-year science priorities; therefore, NAWQA will remain committed to providing its findings within a human-health context while maintaining its non-regulatory, scientific foundation.

5. Continue to develop analytical methods for pharmaceuticals.

- Action item: NAWQA will continue to work with other USGS programs and the National Water-Quality Laboratory to develop and prioritize analytical methods for emerging compounds of concern, such as pharmaceuticals, to human health and aquatic life. Analytical methods for some pharmaceuticals have recently been developed and approval is anticipated in calendar year 2007. Another important analytical method nearing approval is for hormones in water, tissue, and aquatic sediments.

6. Develop hypotheses/issues as the basis of the integrated, source-water quality synthesis product, rather than present an encyclopedia of occurrence information gleaned from multiple studies. Possibilities include linking transport to occurrence; to the effects of pumping; and to the role of recharge and contributing land use.

- Action item: Selected NAWQA scientists and managers will consider this proposal during their report-scoping meeting in the Fall 2007. A subsequent meeting will be held in the winter 2008 to present and begin to integrate scientific findings from the different studies into report themes. A progress report will be shared with the liaison committee attendees next calendar year.

7. Adapt program to address climate change.

- Action item: NAWQA currently is relating land-use and climate changes to trends in ground-water quality through modeling in the High Plains and other areas associated with studies of the movement of contaminants to drinking water wells.
- Action item: NAWQA’s surface-water and ground-water trends studies will enhance understanding of climate change effects by integrating monitoring over the long term with modeling.

8. Develop “pedestrian tools” (accessible, user-friendly, simple) for local and State decision making.

- Action item: NAWQA will continue to promote the development of decision-support tools as derivative products from its modeling efforts, particularly in the more topical studies designed to understand the causes of water-quality conditions and trends.
- Action item: NAWQA will use the National Liaison Committee as a vehicle for increased communication of its information and educational and other “pedestrian” tools.

9. Study pesticides in lakes and reservoirs to help support EPA priorities and information needs.

- Action item: NAWQA will include this idea in their planning discussions for Cycle 3 (2012 – 2023), particularly as it may relate to a source water study design.

10. Link contaminant occurrence and sources to potential human exposure.

- Action item: Detailed examination of exposure in finished drinking water is beyond the mission of NAWQA. However, the feasibility of estimating the number of households nationwide that use domestic wells and that have contaminants in their source water will be evaluated and included, if possible, in the planned synthesis report. Findings will continue to be communicated to those organizations, such as EPA and CDC, who assess risk and exposure.

11. Make connections between land use, sources, and the quality of water resources at the watershed scale. Use case studies to demonstrate.

- Action item: NAWQA is discussing the possibility of pursuing a surface-water study connecting land-use activities, possible sources, and transport of water to streams with contaminant occurrence in public source water supplies as is currently being done for public-supply wells. The proposed surface-water study would expand current surface-water quality assessments and link occurrence in surface-water intakes and finished water with conditions in watersheds.
- Action item: NAWQA will continue to look for ways to use local scale conditions to hypothesize and test national findings and to report them to demonstrate the utility of findings.

12. Compare types of occurrence in different types of wells to enhance EPA risk assessments.

- Action item: NAWQA will begin this in the integrated source-water quality synthesis report product, expected in FY2009.

13. Maintain core competencies in the Program before starting a new source-water study direction

Action item: The Program agrees that core competencies must be sustained if we are to meet our goals of reporting on trends. NAWQA will continue its core monitoring and assessment activities of the conditions and trends in streams and ground water. New work related to source-water quality will not reduce the number of monitoring sites or chemicals assessed in our stream and ground water networks prior to a thorough evaluation of the efficacy of these trend networks for accomplishing Program goals. In other words, we want to reserve the right to make improvements in status and trends monitoring if needed but we would not alter or reduce this component of our Program in order to increase another component.

14. Leverage money with ongoing EPA efforts, such as wadeable streams and EMAP, and integrate State data into analyses.

- Action item: NAWQA will continue to work with EPA's Office of Water (Susan Holdsworth) and Corvallis Lab in integrating NAWQA's targeted and temporally extensive data with EPA's probabilistic, spatial data. The combined data will enhance analyses and understanding beyond that obtained by the individual programs.
- Action item: NAWQA will continue to integrate State data into major river basin analyses and modeling where data and methodology are comparable.