

Minutes
Subcommittee on Ground Water Meeting/Teleconference
Monday, September 21, 2015
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA 20192.

Participants: Bill Cunningham, Bob Schreiber, Lauren Schapker, Cary Betz, Mary Musick, Dave Wunsch, Jeff Davis, Greg Oberley, Tom Patton, Daryll Pope, Gary Rowe, John Yellich, Adrienne Bartlewitz, Rick Copeland, Pixie Hamilton

Agenda: Agenda was approved without revision.

Previous Minutes: Minutes from the August 17th meeting were approved without revision.

Status Report NGWMN Cooperative Agreement: Daryll provided a progress report on the status of the non-competitive funding agreements that USGS has been working on. He announced that six have been awarded (MT, TX, UT, IL, OR, SC), and work is underway. Five other agreements are in process and should start in early 2016 (DE, NC, MS, KS, OK). Daryll noted it will be useful to have different phases of the non-competitive agreements because we learn something with each one and the workload of connecting new data providers will be staggered.

With regard to the competitive grant process, Daryll informed the group that the previously mentioned deadline of early October may slip due to outstanding approvals, but they are getting resolved soon. USGS may be able to issue a Program Announcement without Paperwork Reduction Act approval, which would allow the announcement to be made by mid-October as a best case scenario.

In terms of publicizing the program announcement, Daryll is working on the press release to circulate to the SOGW members who can modify the press release and share it with potentially interested parties. USGS will also release a technical announcement (press release) about the program to agencies and technical organizations. In terms of additional outreach, Wendy Norton will circulate the technical announcement to all of the ACWI groups, Gary Rowe will circulate to the National Water Quality Monitoring Council. Bill and Daryll will work with Pixie Hamilton to assure distribution throughout relevant USGS email lists. Daryll will make sure that each USGS Water Science Centers will receive a copy.

Daryll also suggested hosting webinars with potential applicants to ensure proposals are filled out completely and correctly and asked that anyone with ideas on outreach or webinars to contact him.

Bob mentioned that a mid-October release would pair well with an ACWI SOGW face to face meeting, but asked that USGS determine what can and cannot be discussed in terms of conflicts of interest.

Status Report NGWMN Portal: Daryll updated the SOGW on changes to the portal and reported that a recent Oracle upgrade maybe have temporarily slowed the portal, but it has since been fixed. Various security vulnerabilities are also being addressed, however Daryll noted they are only vulnerabilities and are not threats or attacks to the portal.

Jessica has also spent quite a bit of time lately on well registry management, as data providers have had some issues in adding wells. Bob asked Daryll to explain the process of having USGS offices add wells to the registry. Daryll explained that, as requested, we have asked USGS offices to work with states when selecting sites for the NGWMN.

Bob suggested that perhaps a map could be developed that shows which states pull from water science centers versus those pulling from competitive/non-competitive agreements.

ACWI Annual Meeting & SOGW In-Person Meeting: Bill reported that the full ACWI meeting is scheduled for October 27th and 28th, with the SOGW scheduled to meet the 28th and 29th. Bill asked that those planning to attend keep Friday the 30th open if possible, in the event additional meeting time is needed. Bill will send out invites for the in-person meeting in the next few days.

Mary said she spoke with Wendy and it's ok to do the ACWI meeting in addition to the SOGW meeting, if you are interested, as long as attendees cover their own expenses during the ACWI meeting.

NGWMN "Technical Evaluation Plan (TEP)" for cooperative funding proposals: Daryll reported that the TEP is in good shape, and criteria used to evaluate proposals will be included in the program announcement.

Formation of Program Board: Daryll thanked SOGW members for their work in putting together the draft document that was circulated to the group. This document summarizes detail and responsibilities of the Program Board, requirements of membership, and confidentiality restrictions. The document will be reevaluated each year.

Each proposal will be assigned a lead and the goal is to keep things general, while also maintaining flexibility.

SOGW members provided feedback to Daryll on the draft document, with Mary asking for more description on board membership. Daryll clarified that ideally, 6 of 10 on the Board will be data providers, with the remainder being comprised of USGS staff and SOGW participants.

Mary suggested that Program Board terms be staggered over multiple years to ensure continuity among experienced people on the Board.

Daryll petitioned the group for volunteers who may be interested in serving on the Program Board, particularly data providers and those involved in the pilots. Please send any nominations to Daryll.

Lauren will post the draft Program Board document on the SOGW website once it is finalized.

Outreach Report:

AASG Washington Visit: Dave Wunsch reports a delegation of state geologists will be visiting Washington for the AASG semiannual visit, and the delegation will stress priorities including the NGWMN.

GWPC Annual Forum: Mary said she was looking forward to the opportunity to promote the progress the Network has made, with attendees of the Forum. Several USGS staff will be in attendance and will be presenting on topics relating to monitoring and the Network.

NGWA Summit: A series of abstracts has been submitted on t the NGWMN for the 2016 Summit.

NWQMC 2016 Meeting: A session has been submitted and approved. This is an effort that Daryll is coordinating, and proposals for specific talks within the overall session have all been submitted. Gary mentioned that although the deadline for abstracts has passed, there is still some flexibility, and thus additional GW- and NGWMN-related abstracts could be considered. Also, as an FYI: Gary reported that there will likely be 7 or 8 sessions on groundwater to be presented at the conference.

Adjournment: The SOGW adjourned with the next meeting scheduled for the face-to-face meeting in Reston on October 28-29. The monthly teleconference originally scheduled for October 19th will be cancelled.