

Minutes
Subcommittee on Ground Water Meeting/Teleconference
Monday, March 16th 2015

Participants: Bill Cunningham, Cary Betz, Chris Carlson, Mary Musick, Dave Wunsch, Dave Langseth, Dave Larson, Jessica Lucido, Jeff Davis, Greg Oberley, Tim Parker, Tom Patton, Daryll Pope, Gary Rowe, Lauren Schapker, Bob Schreiber, Ken Valance, Jeff Williams, John Yellich, Todd Hunter, Scott Andres, Sara Chudnoff, Joe Fillingham

Agenda: Agenda was approved without revision.

Previous Minutes: Minutes from February 17th conference call were approved without revision

Introduction of New Attendees Because the meeting of the SOGW took place during the Groundwater Summit, several new attendees joined the meeting in person and introduced themselves.

Update: FY2016 Appropriations Status

Lauren Schapker provided an update of the status of the FY2016 appropriations process, noting current activity in Congress and the schedule for Department of Interior budget hearings in the House and Senate. She provided details on recent tension between Senate and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and the SOGW discussed the impact that tension could have on congressional funding for USGS. She also discussed NGWA and other non-federal groups participating in the effort to support funding before Congress. This year, over 25 groups supported the letter delivered to Congress in support of an increase in funding for the network.

Update: NGWMN Cooperative Agreements

Daryll Pope updated the SOGW on the status of allocating funding received in FY2015 the NGWMN cooperative agreements that he is spearheading, under the overall direction of Bill Cunningham. Daryll noted timeline challenges due to numerous required public comment periods, but USGS is progressing through the required phases. He also commented on a recent meeting with the group within USGS that distributes funds to non-USGS entities, which enabled Daryll and Bill them to get a broader understanding of the details of funding the cooperative agreements.

Daryll discussed the option of carrying FY2015 funds into FY2016, noting that is a “worst-case scenario,” and they fully intend to obligate the funding prior to the end of FY2015. The SOGW discussed funding requirements for various data providers, and how the funding needed may fluctuate in future years, as existing pilots are fully implemented and costs shift to developing new pilots. The SOGW agreed that the first priority will be demonstrating how the network will work and proper stewardship of the funds.

Status Report—Water Quality Pilots

Daryll noted little has happened with the pilots since the last meeting. The New England water quality pilot is scheduled to begin sampling in April, and sampling is also scheduled for Utah, but the data has

yet to start flowing to the portal. Greg Oberley noted he just sent two rounds of analytical results to the Utah Geological Survey.

Greg will be listed on future agenda items to provide an update on the UT water quality pilot.

Report on NGWMN Portal

Jessica Lucido provided an update on the portal, noting she is working to add a component to ensure data can be added to the portal more easily. She reinforced that each data point will be able to be attributed to the state agency it came from—even in the case where well information, lithology, water levels, and water quality may all come from different data providers. This will enable questions about data to be handled most effectively. Modifications to the portal will also be made to the translator piece of the portal in order to make creating new pipelines to the portal easier and to fix a few remaining bugs.

The SOGW discussed several items with the portal that may be addressed as implementation progresses, like confined vs. unconfined wells, where gaps may exist in the data, and cost estimates for ongoing maintenance of the portal.

Daryll Pope described his transition into his new role within USGS, as NGWMN Liaison between the USGS and data providers, to ensure smooth day-to-day management of the network and to spend time on formulating agreements with data providers.

Tip Sheets for Data Providers

Daryll gave the SOGW an overview of new tools being developed to guide current and future data providers. The Tip Sheets being developed will help synthesize topics from the framework document into smaller summaries on key concepts. Potential topics for Tip Sheets include: how to categorize wells, monitoring categories, site selection, adding sites to well registry, how to use portal, and rules of thumb on well density.

Daryll will look to the SOGW for comments and feedback on the tip sheets throughout their development. Mary Musick, Tom Patton, Jeff Davis, Dave Wunsch, Dave Larson, and John Yellich volunteered to provide comments and feedback.

Outreach Report

The SOGW discussed the upcoming session at the Groundwater Summit featuring the NGWMN, along with Sara Chudnoff providing an overview of her presentation on maintaining data in Bernalillo County in NM.

Lauren will circulate to the SOGW Mike Wireman's article that appeared in the latest IAH newsletter.

Gary Rowe, co-chair of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC) provided details on the NAWQA USGS briefing held in DC earlier in March, and noted the recording of the presentation will be available on USGS' website in a few days. He also provided details on the upcoming NAWQA

stakeholders meetings on May 8th in Washington, D.C. at the Washington Court Hotel, during which the third phase of the NAWQA program will be discussed.

The date for NWQMC's 2016 National Water Monitoring Conference (a bi-annual event) will be May 2-6 in Tampa, Florida.

Other Business

Water quality analysis and best suggested practices for data management were each added to the "parking lot" for discussion on future calls.

Next meeting Monday, April 20th