



NWQMC
NATIONAL WATER QUALITY
MONITORING COUNCIL

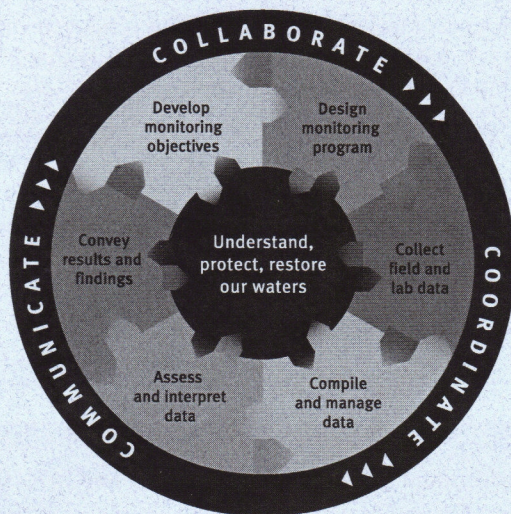
Working Together for Clean Water

Water Information Strategies Work Group

From Data to Information to Action

The Water Information Strategies Work Group

The Council defines and promotes goal-oriented monitoring through the Water Information Strategies (WIS) Work Group. The basic concept is to ensure that monitoring and assessment programs at a variety of spatial and temporal scales are connected via study design to management questions and/or actions. This is achieved by viewing monitoring and assessment along a continuum. WIS is concerned with carefully connecting the information goals of a monitoring program to its information products via strategic planning and design of water quality monitoring systems.



The Council used a collaborative approach to develop a graphic to illustrate a Framework for Monitoring that provides a perspective that moves the entire monitoring and assessment community toward more consistency and comparability. This work group focuses on the cogs that involve:

- Identifying information objectives
- Designing an appropriate monitoring program
- Compiling and managing data
- Assessing and interpreting data

The work group will propose strategies for program development and network design, data management, transfer and access, data analysis, and interpretation and reporting in support of the evolving information needs of water quality management. These strategies will include support of the development of water quality information for national assessments, e.g., the Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Guidance (EPA 2002). They will inform the needs of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council and affiliated subgroups.

Objectives and Operating Principles

The objectives of the WIS Work Group are to:

1. Provide guidance to the monitoring and assessment community to ensure that the information produced from that program and network designs will be responsive to current and long-term questions of water quality management.
2. Refine and promote strategies related to the management, access, and exchange of water quality data between and among various water quality communities.
3. Define, promote, and communicate comparable methods of data integration, analysis, and interpretation as well as methods of conveying the results of these activities.

The WIS Work Group will maintain a perspective representing water quality monitoring and assessment needs within the watershed context (including atmospheric deposition, ground water, and surface waters). The Work Group will accomplish its objective through the establishment of standing teams with a specific focus, and ad hoc project teams may be developed as needed. The Work Group Chair and team leaders will serve as

a Steering Committee for the purpose of ensuring coordination between the Work Group teams as well as with other Council work groups. At present, there are three WIS standing teams: Program Development and Network Design, Data Management and Access, and Data Analysis and Interpretation. If additional tasks become necessary, the Work Group Steering Committee will draft charges and form new teams.

Products and Outcomes

It is anticipated that the Work Group and ad hoc teams will develop tangible products and stated outcomes in accordance with Work Group goals and objectives. The Work Group Steering Committee will work with each team to establish short- and long-term goals for team products and outcomes. In addition, the Work Group Steering Committee will coordinate between its teams to evaluate and promote tools to design monitoring programs, document best current practices, and develop or promote specific information and guidance for the monitoring and assessment community. The Work Group Steering Committee will document the results of specific team tasks and promote their use.

The expected outcomes of the WIS Work Group are:

- Coordinate with other Council work groups and facilitate partnerships between groups working toward similar objectives both nationally and internationally.
- Provide technical expertise to other Council work groups including:
 - Technical support to the National Monitoring Network as needed to refine network design, data management and access strategies, and data analysis and interpretation guidelines
 - Program and content support to the Collaboration and Outreach Work Group and its Conference Planning Committee as a mechanism to inform the water quality monitoring and assessment community about the WIS Work Group concepts and products
 - Coordination of product development, e.g., program design tools and comparable methods of data integration, analysis, and interpretation with the Methods and Data Comparability Board.

Specific WIS Work Group and team tasks and deliverables will be evaluated biennially.

About the NWQMC

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) provides a national forum to coordinate consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies for improving water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting. The Council promotes partnerships that foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management within all elements of the water quality monitoring community. A vital aspect of this role is fostering increased understanding and stewardship of our water resources.

The Council was created in 1997 as a vehicle for bringing together the diverse expertise, skills, and talents needed to develop collaborative, comparable, and cost-effective approaches to water quality monitoring. The Council's 35 members represent federal, state, interstate, local, and municipal governments; watershed and environmental groups; the volunteer monitoring community; universities; and the private sector, including the regulated community. These members meet several times a year in locations throughout the country. The Council is organized into work groups whose activities and products advance its goals. Current work groups are *Water Information Strategies, Methods and Data Comparability Board, Collaboration and Outreach, and National Monitoring Network*.

The Council is co-chaired by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is a subgroup of the Advisory Committee on Water Information that is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Additional information can be obtained from the National Water Quality Monitoring Council's Web site at:

<http://acwi.gov/monitoring/>

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