ACWI

What is ACWI?

The Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) represents the interests of water-information users and professionals in advising the Federal Government on Federal water-information programs and their effectiveness in meeting the Nation's water-information needs.

The Committee's aim is to improve water information for decision-making about natural resources management and environmental protection. The Office of Management and Budget has designated the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), as the lead agency in this effort. Other Federal organizations that fund, collect, or use water resources information work together with the USGS to implement ACWI recommendations.

ACWI members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to serve 4-year terms. The membership includes a maximum of 35 national organizations that represent a wide range of water resources interests and functions, including all levels of government, public interest groups, academia, private industry, and non-profit and professional organizations.

Why is ACWI Needed?

Extensive activities for assessing and monitoring water quality are underway across the United States by both government and non-government groups, including non-profit volunteer organizations and local watershed groups.

Data and information from these multi-scale monitoring efforts provide significant input to federally regulated programs for protecting the environment, as well as for safe recreational use of rivers and streams by individual citizens.

Frequent and reliable communication and consultation is needed to achieve reasonable geographic coverage, to improve access to information, to improve data comparability so that data can be used more than once, and to enhance quality control and quality assurance of data collected from such diverse sources. Ultimately, the complex partnerships fostered by ACWI for acquiring and sharing water information reduce the overall costs for operating resource management and environmental protection programs.

ACWI Member Organizations

U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Tennessee Valley Authority
Association of American State Geologists
Association of State Flood Plain Managers
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
Western States Water Council
Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators
Interstate Council on Water Policy
National Association of County Planners
American Water Resources Association
American Water Works Association
League of Women Voters of the United States
National Ground Water Association
The Universities Council on Water Resources
American Society of Civil Engineers
Electric Power Research Institute
Ground Water Protection Council
North American Lake Management Society
Water Environment Federation

ACWI's Subcommittees

- **National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC)** provides a national forum for coordinating consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies to improve water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting; and promotes partnerships to foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management within all elements of the water quality monitoring community.

- **Methods and Data Comparability Board** provides a forum for exploring, evaluating, and promoting methods that facilitate collaboration and further comparability between water monitoring programs.

- **National Liaison Committee for the National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program** creates a national liaison process for external organizations to work with the NAWQA Program in joint problem solving on water quality issues.

- **Subcommittee on Ground Water** strives to develop and encourage implementation of a nationwide, long-term groundwater quantity and quality monitoring framework to provide information for the planning, management, and development of groundwater supplies.

- **Subcommittee on Hydrology** aims to improve the availability and reliability of the surface-water quantity information that is needed for hazard mitigation, water supply and demand management, and environmental protection.

- **Subcommittee on Sedimentation** promotes and supports development and standardization of equipment, methodologies, and calibration and performance criteria for the collection, analysis, interpretation, and interchange of fluvial-sediment data and related technical information.

- **Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data** – sponsored jointly with the Federal Geographic Data Committee – fosters the development of water-resources components of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

- **Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable** serves as a forum to share information and perspectives to promote better decision-making for the sustainable development of our Nation's water resources.

Products and Activities

ACWI provides a neutral forum where Interior and other water-related Federal agencies – whether their focus is regulation, science, land and resource management, oceans and coastal resources, flood forecasting, or other water-related activities – can work together to coordinate activities, share resources, and collaborate on the collection, storage, management, analysis, and dissemination of water information. The State and non-government member associations within ACWI broadly disseminate water data, information, and guidelines produced by ACWI and its Federal member agencies, thereby directly assisting volunteer monitoring groups, local and regional watershed groups, and State and regional monitoring councils to improve water quality and resource decision-making.

Products developed by the ACWI subcommittees include a diverse suite of databases, standards, guidelines, and training that improve the usability of information that is collected and developed by Federal, State, and local governments and volunteer organizations:

- The Methods and Data Comparability Board is adding physical habitat data elements to the popular Water Quality Data Elements Users' Guide, per a resolution adopted by ACWI during 2009.

- The National Environmental Methods Index, available online, currently has more than 1,000 monitoring methods catalogued.

- Enhancements facilitated through ACWI to the Watershed Boundary Dataset – developed jointly by the USGS and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, with input from other Federal and State agencies – provide a geographic standard for watershed-based resource management.

- ACWI subcommittees provide a variety of training and workshops at the biennial National Monitoring Conference, aimed at monitoring professionals, volunteers, and those who communicate water information to decision-makers and the public.

- During 2009, NWQMC expanded support for development of State and Regional Monitoring Councils, including regular dialogue and information exchange with regional monitoring councils through a series of web-based seminars.

- In 2007-2009, NWQMC began three pilots for a National Monitoring Network in coastal areas. This cooperative effort – led by the Federal government, but with significant input from State, regional, and non-government organizations – helps focus attention on the need to establish similar goals, use comparable methods, and share resources to make maximum use of the funds and monitoring efforts we already have.

- The pilot efforts for the National Monitoring Network in coastal areas have been so successful that ACWI's Subcommittee on Ground Water has undertaken a similar, groundwater-focused effort, which began its own pilots in January 2010.

For current information on all ACWI and subgroup meetings, as well as a large suite of products and databases, visit the ACWI web site at *http://acwi.gov/* and be sure to check out our "What's New" area.

For more information contact:

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