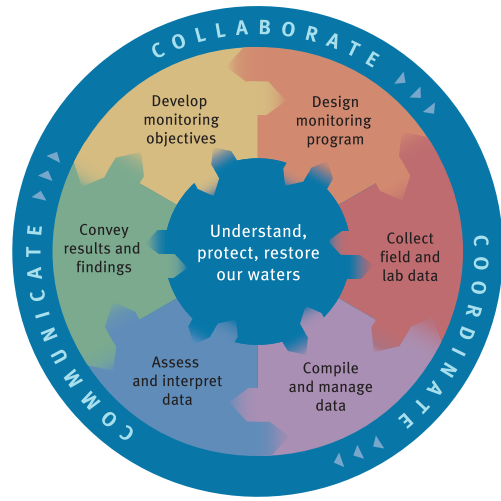


Framework for Monitoring



The Council's Framework illustrates a systematic process to help monitoring groups produce and convey information to understand, protect, and restore our waters. The arrows within the framework wheel visually remind us of the interconnectedness of the six steps and emphasize the need for feedback and evaluation. The outer ring contains the "3 C's"—stressing the need for Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration within and among monitoring entities at every step in the process.

- Communication is the process of conveying information—can be one way, but best as an exchange of thoughts, messages, or ideas among multiple participants.
- Coordination is a process in which two or more participants link, harmonize, or synchronize interaction and activities.
- Collaboration is a process in which two or more participants work collectively to address issues that they cannot solve individually, leading to partnerships, alliances, and teams.

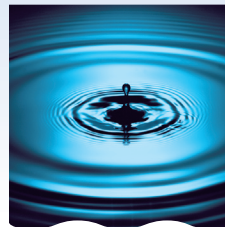


Working Together for Clean Water



Clean, safe, and abundant water is one of our planet's greatest treasures. We depend on it for drinking, for bathing and cleaning, to provide recreational opportunities, to sustain wildlife and plants, and to meet countless other needs. We will not succeed in protecting the integrity of our nation's waters unless Americans act as stewards of their local water resources and pay careful attention to pollutants, development and other factors that can threaten this precious resource.

Compilation of remarks Senator John H. Chafee



What is the National Water Quality Monitoring Council?

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council was created in 1997. It has 35 members—a balanced representation of federal, tribal, inter-state, state, local and municipal governments, watershed and environmental groups, the volunteer monitoring community, universities and the private sector, including the regulated community. The Council is co-chaired by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Council is chartered as a subgroup of the Advisory Committee on Water Information under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. It meets several times a year in locations throughout the country.



Purpose:

The purpose of the Council is to provide a national forum for coordination of consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies to improve water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting. The Council promotes partnerships to foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management within all elements of the water quality monitoring community. A vital aspect of this role is to encourage increased understanding and stewardship of our water resources.



How clean is our water?

What is the condition of the nation's surface, ground, estuarine and coastal waters?

The challenge:

Each year government agencies, industry, academia, and private organizations devote enormous amounts of time, energy, and money to monitor, protect, manage, and restore water resources and watersheds. Differences in project design, methods, data analysis, and data management have often made it difficult for monitoring information and results to be shared and used by all. The restoration and protection of water quality is dependent upon detailed, understandable, easily accessible data and information.

Focus on a National Strategy for Monitoring



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Where, how, and why are water quality conditions changing over time?
Where are the problems related to water quality?
What is causing these problems?
Are programs to prevent or remediate problems working effectively?

National goals are formulated and carried out through Council meetings and work groups. The National Monitoring Conference, a biennial conference sponsored by the Council, provides feedback from constituents and also shapes the Council's goals and objectives. The Council is organized into work groups whose activities and products advance these goals.

Water Information Strategies defines and promotes goal-oriented monitoring by proposing strategies for network design, data analysis and interpretation, and the reporting of results to support the needs of water quality management.

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

Collaboration and Outreach works to build partnerships that foster collaboration among the many elements of the water monitoring community by supporting development of state and regional monitoring councils, manage and facilitate National Monitoring Conferences, and promote the importance of monitoring for decisionmaking.

National Water Quality Monitoring Network for U.S. Coastal Waters and their Tributaries provides information about the health of our oceans and coastal ecosystems, including the influences of upland watersheds on coastal waters. The pilot phase of the Network examines current monitoring and identifies gaps in relation to the proposed national Network design. Pilot studies are complete for three geographic areas: Delaware Bay, Lake Michigan, and San Francisco Bay. The next phase of the Network will be Demonstration Studies. New federal funds will be needed to add sensors in the field, collect and analyze environmental samples, and improve data sharing to move toward a fully implemented Network in designated coastal areas.



VISIT COUNCIL'S WEBSITE AT:
<http://acwi.gov/monitoring/>

Are water quality goals and standards being met?

Working Together for Clean Water

For further information:
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U.S. Geological Survey
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Photos courtesy U.S. Geological Survey, except water drop on cover, and as otherwise credited.
April 2008