



Meeting Notes – National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) WebEx Meeting, Friday, April 20, 2012 (Agenda and list of participants on pages 4-5)

Actions, Decisions and other Information

1. **Overview of Council and Responsibilities** – Susan Holdsworth and Mike Yurewicz
 - Susan went over the purpose statement and responsibilities of the Council, per the Terms of Reference.
 - Susan reviewed membership and why a variety of member organizations are necessary to keep the Council balanced.
 - This information can be found at: http://acwi.gov/monitoring/about_the_council.html
 - Council tasks are carried out through the workgroups.
 - Mike noted that you don't have to be a member of the Council to participate in workgroup.
 - State and Regional Councils are an extremely valuable resource, and the national Council needs to continue supporting the development of these groups.
2. **Decision:** Upon a motion duly made (Neil Kamman), seconded (Curtis Cude), and carried, the November 15-17, 2011 Council Meeting minutes from Salt Lake City were approved and will be posted on the website (Kim Martz).
3. **Reference Site Network** – Jeff Deacon
 - **Action:** An executive committee has been formed, and the group will develop a draft workplan for 2012-2013 after the Portland Conference that will be presented to Steering Committee by the end of May and then later to the full Council.
 - **ACTION AT CONFERENCE:** Spread the word – presentation on *Establishing a National Network of Reference Watersheds and Monitoring Sites for Freshwater Streams in the United States* by Jeff Deacon in the session B2 *Challenges in Defining Reference Conditions* (Tuesday, May 1, 1:30 – 3:00 pm).
4. **Water Quality Portal** – Charles Kovatch
 - **FYI:** A joint USGS/EPA press release will be announced on April 30, 2012;
 - **Link to portal:** <http://www.waterqualitydata.us/>
 - **Outcomes:** USGS/EPA have enhanced water-quality data access; common data standards and web services improve on historical data search and query approach; one-stop shopping for water managers and the public.
 - **Future enhancements include** –
 - data integration (NHD and NEMI);
 - inclusion of other data sources from additional partners, including real-time monitoring, biological and habitat data, and legacy STORET data;
 - improvements in outreach (help desk, enabling data uploads); and
 - geospatial enhancements such as a map interface and an NHD-based search capability.
 - **Action:** The portal is affiliated with the Council, the Council needs to work on getting other agencies to feed their data into WQX so we can get it into the portal.
 - **Action:** Portal should be presented to ACWI, to increase the level of awareness among other Federal and non-Federal agencies, so that they will actively think about how to get their data sets into the portal.
 - **Action:** Charles will talk with Rick Hooper about issues in the representation of sensor data in WQX, because currently WQX can only handle summary data.
 - **ACTION AT CONFERENCE:** Spread the word
 - **Workshop: *New Techniques in Accessing and Analyzing Water-Quality Data*** in Session B9 on Tuesday May 1st, 1:30 – 3:00 pm.
 - **Presentation:** Session F1: *Introducing the Water Quality Data Portal* by Nate Booth in Session F1: *Data Access through Innovative Web Technologies* on Wednesday, May 2nd, 1:30 – 3:00 pm.
 - **Demonstrations at USGS Booth:** Times vary
5. **Roundtable:** Tracy Hancock presented information on monitoring on Forest Service Land: if you are interested in learning more or participating contact Tracy at: tchancock@fs.fed.us
6. **Volunteer Monitoring Committee** – Barb Horn
 - **FYI:** Volunteer monitoring page up on the website: <http://acwi.gov/monitoring/vm/index.html>

- A map that illustrates all the volunteer monitoring programs across the country will be on the website also.
 - **Action: State Representatives and USEPA folks**, the committee would like to include a **directory** on the website that has the name of a volunteer monitoring contact for every State, as well as a contact for each of the 10 EPA Regions to help anybody who wants to exchange information with other volunteer monitoring groups. This list would be updated annually by the volunteer monitoring coordinator affiliated with the Council. Neil Kamman suggested that instead of identifying the volunteer monitoring coordinator, you may want to identify the head of the monitoring program overall. Please send your contacts and those States or EPA Regional Representatives to Barb Horn, barb.horn@state.co.us.
7. **Methods Board/Sensors Workgroups** – Dan Sullivan
- Primary active workgroups are NEMI and the Aquatic Sensor Workgroup.
 - Dan recapped current activities (statistical methods, MEMO, green rating update, and water quality portal integration). **Action:** PowerPoint will be posted on Website (Kim Martz).
 - MEMO is the sensors web portal, which brings together information from the Alliance for Coastal Technology and NEMI: <http://infotrek.er.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=240:1:968412186696139>
 - **Action:** Data elements for sensors – draft final list will be released at NMC on May 2. The list has been broken into 3 categories: essential, recommended, and conditional. The sensors data elements will be submitted to ACWI for approval during summer 2012.
8. **National Monitoring Network** – Mike Yurewicz
- NMN was a major effort for the Council in 2004-2006, seeking to provide a “network of networks.”
 - Initially there were 3 demonstration studies that are wrapping up now. Results from 2 of those studies will be presented at the Conference.
 - There are also 2 new demonstration studies (Albemarle Sound and Puget Sound) that are just beginning work.
 - A major reason the Council needs to “push” this effort is the National Ocean Council’s draft National Ocean Policy specifically names NWQMC as the group that should implement this effort.
 - **Action:** Because we’re going to have 1000+ people at the conference, Mike would appreciate hearing about any connections/dialog the Council members may have with others in Portland on this topic. We’ll be discussing this more after the Conference.
9. **Roundtable** – Jim Dorsch described the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. This group deals with emerging contaminants, mercury, nutrients, new nutrient criteria development, TMDLs and more. For more information contact Jim at: jdorsch@mwr.dst.co.us.
10. **Water Information Strategies (WIS) Workgroup Update** – Mary Skopec
- The Integrated Monitoring white paper will be available at the Council booth at the Conference.
 - **Action:** Council members are needed to weigh in on the graphic in the paper, to ensure it looks its best.
 - WIS plans to create a web page on the Council’s Web site on monitoring for spills and floods;
 - **Action:** Send Mary Skopec any information you would like to include on this web page.
 - Volunteer and third party monitoring survey conducted by SC now complete;
 - **Action:** Mary will check with Dave Chestnut to see if report available to post.
 - Water quality indices survey (NJ) – Leslie McGeorge
 - **Action:** Please let Leslie (leslie.mcgeorge@dep.state.nj.us) know if you’re interested in participating in the water quality indices survey. It does not have to be a State index and even volunteer monitoring group indices would be great to have.
 - Future work topics include NJ water quality indices survey report-out will take place in June 2012; data tools / Hydrodesktop; climate change white paper that will be sent to full Council in June 2012; a group-authored document titled, “What your manager needs to know about monitoring.”
 - The next WIS call is May 9 at 11.00 Eastern Time.
11. **Water Quality Statistical and Assessment – online “Statistical NEMI” demo** – Doug McLaughlin
- This effort is aimed at adding a new statistical/assessment component to NEMI, to help fill some of the gaps in the Council “wheel” (i.e., “design monitoring program” and “assess and interpret data”).
 - One goal is to develop a toolbox to support assessment and interpretation of data.
 - By adding to the existing NEMI, we can capitalize on the similar database structure and the sizeable current user community for NEMI.
 - There are currently 22 statistical methods or items in the database.

- See Doug's PowerPoint to go through the main screens to see what NEMI looks like and described the various data fields and options. **Action:** PowerPoint will be posted on Council Web site (Kim Martz)
 - The prototype is NOT an "expert system" or a Google search.
 - **Action:** Council members are encouraged to try the prototype yourself and give us some feedback.
http://cida.usgs.gov/nemi/search/statistic_search/
 - If you want to be involved in developing and implementing the "statistical NEMI," contact Doug McLaughlin, Dan Sullivan, or Leslie McGeorge.
12. **Roundtable** – Shaun McKinney, described the Natural Resource Conservation Service's water quality initiatives and talked about development of a brand new water quality index that looks at the efficacy of activities undertaken as part of the water quality initiative. NRCS can now spend Farm Bill dollars on monitoring, so they're trying to figure out the best way to implement that monitoring (through a conservation activity). For more information, contact Shaun McKinney, shaun.mckinney@por.usda.gov.
13. **Roundtable** – Jeff Thomas, described ORSANCO as a 6-State commission that has responsibility for monitoring the mainstem Ohio River and setting pollution control standards for the River. Jeff is charge of biological program. ORSANCO is also involved with a spill notification and tracking program, a bimonthly monitoring network for water quality parameters, TMDL development, a nutrient trading program for the basin, and increasingly in the water quantity arena. For more information, contact Jeff Thomas at: jthomas@orsanco.org.
14. **Collaboration and Outreach Workgroup** – Cathy Tate
- **Action:** Please send along any ideas or volunteer for any of the C&O's usual activities: quarterly web seminars; social media tools; twice-yearly newsletter; collaboration with State, regional, and Tribal water monitoring councils.
 - **ACTION AT THE CONFERENCE:** Spread the word, the workshop session A8/B8 on *Building, Empowering & Sustaining State, Regional and Tribal Water Monitoring Councils and Water Monitoring Partnerships and Alliances* is on Tuesday, May 1st 8:00 – 10:30 am and 1:30 – 3:00 pm.
 - **Action:** During the past year the C&O conducted an inventory of State, regional, and Tribal councils to learn their composition, scope, finances, objectives, leadership, etc. If you are involved in one of these Councils and have not filled in the inventory; please do so.
 - **Action:** Please see the Summary of Council activities for 2011-2012 on the website at: http://acwi.gov/monitoring/activities/Council-Summary_2011-12.pdf to get the latest activities of the Council for the upcoming Conference.
 - **FYI:** Water Words that Work is helping the Council refine our message and make our products more accessible.
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15. 2012 NMC – Conference Responsibilities/Update – Cathy Tate, Mike Yurewicz and Susan Holdsworth
- **Update:** The 2012 NMC has over 1000 water practitioners registered, plus 94 participants arriving on "Bridge Day" (the last day, which overlaps with River Network's annual Rally). The NMC has 336 platform presentations, 150 technical posters, 33 workshops, short courses, and panels. The Council is sponsoring several sessions/presentations at NMC. EPA's National Aquatic Resource Surveys Program is also holding its national meeting in conjunction with NMC.
 - **ACTION FOR CONFERENCE:**
 - Council members – please sign up to volunteer, especially for Bridge Day activities, the Council booth, and registration (Mon p.m., Tues, and Fri) at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Aju0EJhnjMF2dGp1V2dMR05hVHA4U2kxaVhBR3ZUWXc>
 - ALL if you hear anything that's really interesting during NMC, let Mike Yurewicz know so he can say something about it (if appropriate) at the closing plenary session.
16. **Preview of Council Presentation for Conference** – Mike Yurewicz
- **Action:** Mike Yurewicz previewed his plenary presentation and asked Council members for feedback. He will post the text of his speech on SharePoint, so people can look at it and give him comments.
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17. **Selection of 2014 Conference Site** – Cathy Tate
- Call for proposals went out and at time of call we received only one very nice proposal for Cincinnati, Ohio.
 - **Update:** As of April 23, we have received a proposal from a New England group for either Portland, ME, Boston, MA, or Providence, RI.
18. **Next Council Meeting** – maybe in August; do not know if it will be face to face or virtual as it will depend on Council funds available at that time.

MEETING AGENDA

- 1:00 pm – Welcome and Roll Call (Cathy Tate, U.S. Geological Survey, Council Executive Secretary)
- 1:05 pm – Brief Overview of Council and Responsibilities (Mike Yurewicz, USGS, Susan Holdsworth, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Council Co-chairs)
- 1:15 pm – Council Business (Approval of Salt Lake City minutes)
- 1:20 pm – Update on Reference Site Network (Jeff Deacon, USGS)
- 1:30 pm – Water Quality Portal (Charles Kovatch, USEPA)
- 1:50 pm – **Roundtable** – Tracy Hancock for Mike Eberle, USDA, Forest Service
- 1:55 pm – Volunteer Monitoring Committee (Barb Horn, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Volunteer Monitoring Representative)
- 2:05 pm – Methods Board/Sensors (Dan Sullivan, USGS, Co- chair)
- 2:20 pm – National Monitoring Network (Mike Yurewicz)
- 2:30 pm – **Roundtable** - Jim Dorsch, Denver Metro Wastewater Reclamation District, National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Representative
- 2:35 pm – Water Information Strategies Workgroup Update (Mary Skopec, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Represents States of USEPA Region 7, Co-chair)
- 2:45 pm – Water Quality Statistical and Assessment - online “Statistical NEMI” demo (Doug McLaughlin, Western Michigan University, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc. Representative, Co-chair)
- 3:00 pm – Break
- 3:15 pm – **Roundtable** – Shaun McKinney, USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- 3:20 pm – **Roundtable** – Jeff Thomas, Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), River Basin Commission Representative
- 3:25 pm – Collaboration & Outreach Workgroup (Cathy Tate and Barb Horn, Co-chairs)
- 3:40 pm – 2012 National Monitoring Conference, Conference Responsibilities/Update (Mike and Susan)
- 3:50 pm – Preview of Council Presentation (Mike Yurewicz)
- 4:15 pm – Selection of 2014 Conference Site (Cathy Tate and others)
- 4:30 – 5:00 pm – General Discussion and Closing Comments (Mike and Susan)

Participants:

Andrew Fayram	andrew.fayram@wisconsin.gov
Barb Horn	barb.horn@state.co.us
Carol Lewis	cilewis@usgs.gov
Cathy Tate	cmtate@usgs.gov
Charles Kovatch	kovatch.charles@epa.gov
Cheryl Buchwald	cabuchwa@usgs.gov
Chris Piehler	chris.piehler@la.gov
Chuck Dvorsky	charles.dvorsky@tceq.texas.gov
Curtis Cude	curtis.g.cude@state.or.us
Dan Sullivan	djsulliv@usgs.gov
David Fuller	drfuller.rg@gmail.com
Doug McLaughlin	douglas.mclaughlin@wmich.edu
Greg Pettit	pettit.greg@deq.state.or.us
Jane Caffrey	jcaffrey@uwf.edu
Jason Jones, AZ	jdj@azdeq.gov
Jeff Deacon	jrdeacon@usgs.gov
Jeff Schloss	jeff.schloss@unh.edu
Jeff Thomas	jthomas@orsanco.org
Jim Dorsch	jdorsch@mwr.dst.co.us
Kim Martz	kimmartz@usgs.gov
Leslie McGeorge	leslie.mcgeorge@dep.state.nj.us
Maggie Craig	maggie.craig@tetrattech.com
Mary Skopec	mary.skopec@dnr.iowa.gov
Mike McDonald	mcdnald.michael@epa.gov
Mike Woodside	mdwoodsi@usgs.gov
Mike Yurewicz	mcyurewi@usgs.gov
Neil Kamman	neil.kamman@state.vt.us
Peter Tennant	ptennant@orsanco.org
Rick Hooper	rhooper@cuahsi.org
Shaun McKinney	shaun.mckinney@por.usda.gov
Sheri Alcalde	salcalde@usgs.gov
Steve Wolfe	steven.wolfe@dep.state.fl.us
Susan Holdsworth	holdsworth.susan@epa.gov
Tony Shaw	tshaw@pa.gov
Tracy Hancock	tchancock@fs.fed.us
Wendy Norton	wenorton@usgs.gov