

## Advisory Committee on Water Information

### ROLE

The Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) represents the interests of water-information users and professionals in advising Federal programs working to address the Nation's water-information needs. The ACWI's goal is to improve access to and quality of water information that is needed for making sound decisions about natural resources management and environmental protection. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 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.

The duties of the ACWI are solely advisory. The group provides advice on efforts to operate a cost effective national program of water data collection and analysis that meets the priority water information needs of the Federal Government and, to the extent possible within available resources, the needs of the non-Federal community that are tied to national interests.

The ACWI advises on Federal efforts to develop uniform standards, guidelines, and procedures for the collection, analysis, management, and dissemination of water information in order to improve quality, consistency, and accessibility nationwide. Information exchange conducted through the ACWI subcommittees and workgroups also helps with sharing best practices and avoiding wasteful duplication across the hundreds of government and non-government organizations that collect and analyze water information across the Nation.

### CHARTER

The ACWI Charter is renewed every 2 years, most recently in July 2016, and can be found online at [https://acwi.gov/a2016\\_charter-jewell.pdf](https://acwi.gov/a2016_charter-jewell.pdf).



## MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

The ACWI Chair is the Department of the Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary for Water and Science; the Alternate Chair is the USGS Associate Director for Water. The ACWI Executive Secretary, a USGS employee, is the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) under the standards and procedures prescribed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

ACWI members are appointed by the Chair to serve 4-year terms. All current member organizations had their memberships renewed in 2014 and will need renewal again in 2018. Membership is representational; members are organizations rather than individuals, and each member organization designates a representative and an alternate. The ACWI is authorized to include a maximum of 35 national organizations including all levels of government, public interest groups, academia, private industry, and non-profit and professional organizations. No registered lobbyists are permitted.

Collectively, membership on the ACWI and its various subcommittees and workgroups includes more than 100 organizations, represented by more than 160 individuals. From among those organizations, 25 are currently members of the parent ACWI:

- U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (vacant)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Association of American State Geologists
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies
- Western States Water Council
- Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
- Interstate Council on Water Policy
- National Association of County Planners
- American Water Resources Association
- 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
- National Council on Air and Stream Improvement
- Water Environment Federation
- Stantec Consulting
- Northeast-Midwest Institute
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- National Hydrologic Warning Council

### Formation of Subcommittees

Subject to the DFO's approval, the ACWI may form subcommittees and workgroups for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research; much of the work of the ACWI is carried out in this manner. Subcommittees must present their reports and other findings to the full ACWI before providing those products to DOI leadership. Some subcommittees are ongoing, and some are formed for a limited time, to perform a specific task.

ACWI sub-groups include the following, each with a specific area of expertise (some of these subcommittees include multiple workgroups, which are not listed here):

- Subcommittee on Ground Water – 18 members currently, plus about 12 non-voting, non-member participants
- Subcommittee on Hydrology – 21 members currently
- Subcommittee on Sedimentation – 20 members currently
- Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data – 15 members currently, plus about 12 non-voting, non-member participants
- National Water Quality Monitoring Council – 33 members currently
- Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup – 36 members currently
- Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable – no fixed membership; this is an open roundtable which anyone can join to share information about sustainability issues

Members serve without compensation; however, when non-Federal members travel for official ACWI business, the USGS is authorized to reimburse their travel, hotel, and per diem expenses; this averages about \$1,000-\$1,500 per person per meeting. The full ACWI usually meets once a year, always in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; holding meetings in this location helps to minimize costs, since many of the member agencies' representatives are stationed in the Washington, D.C. area. There may also be one or two teleconference-based meetings each year to help ACWI member organizations familiarize themselves with materials that will be discussed during the annual face-to-face meeting.

The DOI provides members appointed to the ACWI with materials explaining their ethical obligations, and members must endeavor to avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the ACWI's operations, activities, or advice. Records are maintained in accordance with approved records disposition schedules and are available through the Freedom of Information Act.

## **STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION**

Support services for the activities of the ACWI and its sub-groups are provided by the USGS, through the DFO. Staff time (3.5 FTE during FY 2017) is divided among three main categories:

- 1.5 FTE for planning and participation in all (approximately 90-100 annually) meetings of the ACWI and its sub-groups, including the National Water Quality Monitoring Council's technical webinar series
- 1.0 FTE for preparation of collaboration and outreach products such as the twice-yearly water quality monitoring newsletter, and maintenance and updates for the National Environmental Index, the Water Quality Portal, and other online products
- 1.0 FTE for record keeping, administration of membership lists and invitation letters, and reporting several times a year on membership and activities, as well as maintaining the ACWI website and keeping the General Services Administration's Federal Advisory Committee Database (<https://www.facadatabase.gov/default.aspx>) up to date with details about membership, meetings, and products

## RECENT ACWI PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Water Quality Portal – this interagency effort was facilitated through years of conversations between the USGS and the EPA, through the ACWI and its sub-groups, in particular the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (<https://www.waterqualitydata.us/>)
- Open Water Data Initiative (<https://acwi.gov/spatial/owdi/>), which is a key focus of the Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data
- Bulletin 17-C, Guidelines for Determining Flood Flow Frequency – this is a USGS report that the ACWI Subcommittee on Hydrology played a major role in updating (<https://acwi.gov/hydrology/Frequency/b17c/>)
- National Environmental Methods Index – an index of environmental monitoring methods assembled and made available online by the Methods and Data Comparability Board, which is a workgroup of the ACWI's National Water Quality Monitoring Council (<https://www.nemi.gov/home/>)
- National Ground-Water Monitoring Network – this USGS effort was begun through the ACWI Subcommittee on Ground Water (<https://cida.usgs.gov/ngwmn/>)
- Major technical conferences: the National Monitoring Conference, hosted by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (<https://acwi.gov/monitoring/conference/>) and the Joint Federal Interagency Conference on Sedimentation and Hydrologic Modeling, co-hosted by the Subcommittees on Sedimentation and Hydrology (<http://www.sedhyd.org/2015/>)
- A 2016 update to the *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate*, which was originally prepared in 2011 in response to priorities of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force.

