

Evolution of the Subcommittee on Hydrology in ACWI

INITIATION

The earliest hydrologic group later known as the *Subcommittee on Hydrology (SOH)* started out in 1945 as a Federal interagency group operating within the federal government. The first committee meeting was held on October 1, 1945, organized under the Federal Inter-Agency River Basin Committee.

ORGANIZATION ADVANCEMENT

A brief history of the organizations which the hydrologic groups report to is provided in the following table.

Governing Organizations	
Year	Names of Organizations
Oct. 1, 1945	Federal Inter-Agency River Basin Committee
Sept. 14, 1954	Inter-Agency Committee on Water Resources
June 7, 1966	Water Resources Council
Dec. 7, 1982	Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Water Data
Dec. 10, 1991	Water Information Coordination Program (WICP)
Aug. 8, 1998	Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI)

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) originally established the *Water Information Coordination Program (WICP)* in the 1960's. In 1991, OMB formally established and updated the authority to the WICP. The overall purpose of the program is to improve water information for decision making about natural resources management and environmental protection. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the lead agency for overseeing the WICP. Other Federal organizations that fund, collect, or use water resources information work together with the USGS to implement program recommendations.

Federal activities and funding for water resources information are integrally tied to partnerships with non-Federal entities. Therefore, the Secretary of the Interior established an advisory committee under the *Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)* to help implement the program at the national level. As a result, the purposes of the *Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI)* established in 1998 are to identify water information needs, evaluate their effectiveness of water information programs and recommend improvements.

Presently, the SOH now reports directly to the ACWI, which operates under the FACA. Under this structure the membership in the SOH is open to Federal, interstate, State, Tribal, and local government agencies, as well as private and non-profit organizations. The Terms of Reference for the SOH and other information are available at the web site: <http://acwi.gov/hydrology/>

PURPOSE STATEMENTS

As the parent organization of the hydrologic groups has changed over the years, as did the purpose, membership and participation in the hydrologic groups, as well as the activities of the hydrologic groups and their associated subordinate groups. A brief statement of purposes from origination through present which provide vital goals to committees/subcommittees to accomplish is given below. The SOH keeps moving on to fulfill its new mission as the established purpose states.

Purposes of Hydrology Committees/Subcommittees	
Year	Purpose Statement
1945	To develop and recommend continuing procedures to coordinate activities in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of hydrologic data
1988	To identify water information needs, evaluate the effectiveness of water information programs and recommend improvements
1998-Present	To improve surface-water quantity information in availability, reliability, and management

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Membership in the hydrologic groups has greatly expanded over time along with their purposes and is listed as follows.

1945 Membership (6):

Dept. of Agriculture – Soil Conservation Service
Dept. of the Army – Corps of Engineers
Dept. of Commerce – Weather Bureau
Dept. of the Interior – Geological Survey
Federal Power Commission
Tennessee Valley Authority

1963 Expanded Membership (16):

Dept. of the Army – Corps of Engineers
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare – Public Health Service
Dept. of Commerce – Bureau of Public Roads; Weather Bureau
Dept. of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service; Forest Service; Soil Conservation Service
Dept. of the Interior – Bureau of Mines; Bureau of Reclamation; National Park Service; Bureau of Land Management; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife;
Geological Survey
Federal Power Commission
Tennessee Valley Authority

2006 Subcommittee on Hydrology Membership (20):

Agricultural Research Service

American Forests
 Association of State Floodplain Managers
 Bureau of Land Management
 Bureau of Reclamation
 Defenders of Property Rights
 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
 Federal Emergency Management Agency
 Federal Highway Administration
 National Hydrologic Warning Council
 National Science Foundation
 NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center
 National Weather Service
 Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 Office of Surface Mining
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 U.S. Forest Service
 U.S. Geological Survey

WORKGROUPS

Along with the changes in the hydrologic group membership and purposes have come changes in priorities, which are reflected by the existence of the following workgroups in varied time periods.

Purpose-Driven Workgroups	
Year	Names of Workgroups
1951	Water Quality; Snow; Bibliography; Waves; Hydrologic Networks; and Drainage Area Size
1960's	Ground Water; Flow Frequency Analysis; Water Quality; Bibliography; Radio Frequency; Alaska Networks
2000	Hydrologic Modeling (initiated in 1996); Streamgaging Network (initiated in 1998); Satellite Telemetry (STIWG) (chartered in 1985; joined SOH in 1998); Hydrologic Frequency Analysis (initiated in 1999); Radio Frequency
2004	Hydrologic Modeling (HMWG) (<i>Chair: Don Frevert, BOR</i>); Hydrologic Frequency Analysis (HFAWG) (<i>Will Thomas, ASFPM</i>); Satellite Telemetry (STIWG) (<i>Bonnie Wright, USFS</i>)
2007	Hydrologic and Hydraulic GIS Applications Work Group (<i>Chair: Bill Merkel, NRCS</i>)

For assistance in conducting its business, the SOH may establish subordinate groups. Such workgroups will gather information, conduct research, analyze relevant issues and facts, and draft proposed position papers and recommendations for deliberation by the SOH. The SOH will review the status of subordinate groups each year and terminate those that have completed their

assignments. Thus far, the most significant accomplishments the SOH has achieved are through the efforts within its workgroups. The workgroups have been the engine of the SOH to reach many milestones in route towards its goals.

MAJOR PRODUCTS

Significant documents completed by the hydrologic groups and associated workgroups throughout the years include the following:

Titles of Produced Documents
Instructions for compilation of Unit Hydrograph Data
Requirements for additional hydrologic stations to meet Federal needs
Hydrologic Unit Maps 7
Uniform technique for determining flood flow frequencies - Guidelines for Determining Flood Flow Frequency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin #17, 1976 • Bulletin #17A, 1977 • Bulletin #17B, 1981
Interagency Hydrologic Modeling Conferences/Workshop Proceedings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Conference, April 19-23, 1998, Las Vegas, NV • Hydrologic Processes Modeling Workshop, November 8-9, 2000, Tucson, Arizona • Second Conference, July 28-August 1, 2002, Las Vegas, NV • Joint 8th Federal Interagency Sedimentation and 3rd Hydrologic Modeling Conferences, April 2-6, 2006 Reno, NV
Issue papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SOH's issue paper on "USGS' Maintenance of the Existing Stream Gaging Program presented to the ACWI, 2004 • The HFAWG's issue paper on the "Usage of Expected Moments Approach to Modify the Bulletin 17B" presented in 2006 ACWI's annual meeting • The STIWG's issue paper on "GOES DCS Vulnerabilities" presented in 2007 ACWI's annual meeting
The first SOH quarterly newsletter, "THE SOH CONNECTION" issued on December 15, 2006

OTHER INFORMATION

A current listing of SOH Terms of Reference, activities, meeting minutes, and newsletters are maintained at the previously cited. Complete and updated information on WICP, ACWI, etc. is available at the following web site: <http://acwi.gov/wpinfo.html>.

(Compiled by S. Samuel Lin, FERC in July 2007)