

**RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS
COOPERATOR ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS**

FIRST NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM

MARCH 9, 2005

WASHINGTON, DC

On March 9, 2005 twenty-six representatives of USGS water cooperators joined fourteen managers from the U.S. Geological Survey for the first national meeting of stakeholders in the Cooperative Water Program (see attached roster). The cooperators represented a cross section of the nearly 1,400 government entities at the State, local, and tribal government level who participate with the USGS in jointly funded water data collection and studies. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the USGS and the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP). Marci DuPraw of Resolve served as the Facilitator.

The objectives of the meeting were to provide an opportunity for the cooperators to hear about the status and recent achievements of the Program, to learn about the nearly-completed external review of the Program, to give feedback to the USGS about the Coop Program, and to share common ideas with each other (see attached agenda). To summarize the Cooperator panel discussion:

Strengths of the Program:

- Innovative; ability to synthesize disparate approaches to data collection
- Full agency support and resources
- Gaging Network itself and its longevity
- Quality, reliability and availability of data
- “cost-effective” way to provide high quality data; consistent data over time
- Dedicated staff, bring a lot of expertise
- Way of leveraging cooperative resources
- Separation between ‘information’ and ‘regulation’ (science-based objectivity)

Challenges that USGS could Improve On:

- Need clarity about scale of new initiatives – has resource implications
- How baseline/background water quality is taken into consideration re WQ standards...USGS should stay in objective science mode; technical/regional-peer benchmarks OK, being careful not to adopt ‘stds’ that might not be supported....
- Help reconcile directional pulls on District Chiefs – e.g., agency mission/national public good vs. district/state/local needs
- Pressure from USDOJ on USGS to turn inward vs. toward cooperator needs
- Training cooperators to help with streamgaging activities
- Improve coordination with state, Federal and tribal entities seeking funds for streamgaging
- Increase Federal match
- Get out of ‘crisis’ mentality (toward long term planning) – note: thought this applied esp. to state strategic planning (not USGS – they do national long-term strategic planning)

Possible Cooperator Actions:

- Document benefits of data collection (and also Interpretive studies) to states

- States being transparent w/USGS re Strategic Planning (and doing such planning at state level) to coordinate deployment of people, resources, etc.
- Ongoing support for streamgaging network and USGS role in it
- Take more ownership of Coop Studies (offer in-kind services, esp. in terms of state staff involvement; co-author reports...)
- Improve coordination with state, fed, tribal entities seeking funds for streamgaging
- Get out of crisis mentality – take more long-term view, do strategic planning
- Coordinated effort across cooperators (nationwide) to seek additional Federal funds for Coop Water Program (esp. for NSIP stream gages of National interest) – e.g., expand role of statewide group(s) like ICWP, WSWC, ASIWPCA...

At the conclusion of the meeting, the facilitator led a discussion to amplify the list of strengths, challenges, and actions that could be taken for the Cooperative Water Program. The results:

Strengths:

- Sound, unbiased science (science independent from policy)
- Credibility
- Ability to draw on entire agency resources
- Direction of the work is both locally-led to a large extent, but because of soundness and consistency, easily rolled up for National picture. Tricky balance to maintain and explain, but a real strength of program.
- USGS is now delivering better data products and delivery, real time, less lost data
- Quality, longevity, access to data key strengths

Areas where the USGS could improve:

- Timeliness of Products
- Highlighting existing “cooperative” effort
- Document program benefits
- Lack of state and Federal budget increases to cover cost of inflation
- USGS produce targeted Fact Sheets and communications to also assist in the funding process
- USGS needs to listen to cooperators and Strike appropriate balance between data and projects
- Expanding Coop program to include other disciplines, importance of streamgaging program, bring in extra dollars and more participation to project work
- Use of USGS equipment (by states) for relaying traffic information (example), bring in more support for program.
- Increase public and political awareness of the availability of equipment for various uses.

Actions Cooperators could take:

- Proactive outreach, get the message out

- Grass roots up at local level – local/county/state--talk about streamgaging, flood protection, QW, WQ issues, talk about value of programs and real life impacts. Nice to get ahead and articulate values, as opposed to crisis reaction and management to be more strategic.
- Helping USGS brand itself that it is a science agency – USGS State of the Union.
- Water is a big issue, all people should be able to relate to it.
- Cooperators can help set vision for multi-year program planning.
- Cooperators can collaborate with USGS on data collection and interpretive studies.
- Need for cooperators to get together and form a commonality, consistent story, that cooperators can take to congress to request additional support for program, ICWP, WSWC, TWDB for state-specific funds; more effective National letter jointly from Cooperators to take to each of local state reps for overall support at Federal level for NSIP program.
- Incorporate working with USGS and Admin and Congress to bring National perspectives into planning/budget process
- Coordinated efforts, more effective and more powerful – and not compete for individual piecemeal resources.
- Involvement of Cooperator throughout all stages of products, planning, implementation, and delivery.

The **final discussion** was a session just among the Cooperators. Among the comments emanating from this session:

- Cooperators cannot continue indefinitely to absorb more than their fare share of cost increases. USGS needs to pick up some of the increased costs.
- Both the Cooperative Water Program and the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) are in need of additional Congressional funding.
- Cooperators would like to be partners, not just payers.
- Cooperators, working at times with each other and at times with the USGS, can help with public relations, political strategy, and strategic planning. They should discuss these issues with their association members and encourage them to make their feelings known to influential groups.
- Four associations emerged as potential leaders in consolidating cooperator actions: Interstate Council on Water Policy, Western States Water Council, Association of State Floodplain Managers, and National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies. ICWP will put the notes from this meeting on their website.
- Cooperators can be a part of the work, including data collection and projects.
- USGS should protect data first before interpretive studies.
- A follow-up meeting similar to this one might be helpful.

2ND NATIONAL COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE FOR THE USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM

January 31-February 1, 2006

Washington, DC

There was a very good turnout for the reception Monday evening and for the Roundtable meeting Tuesday, January 31, 2006, including approximately 70 people representing Cooperators from 20 states and 45 people from USGS Headquarters and Water Science Centers in 18 states.

Following a challenging and informative series of presentations regarding current capabilities of the CWP, its relation to the NSIP and the management of both programs, we broke into 5 smaller groups to explore and evaluate options for improving the CWP. Each group included a random mix of Cooperator and USGS representatives in a discussion and refinement of suggestions. However, USGS representatives did not participate in the prioritization of these ideas, since they are especially interested in the Cooperators' viewpoint. As a first cut, the following outline summarizes the ideas of greatest interest to the participating Cooperators:

WHAT CAN USGS DO TO IMPROVE THE CWP?

Communication:

- Hold future Cooperator meetings at state or regional level
- Broaden the "customer base" for gaging (e.g., identify underpaying beneficiaries)
- Give Cooperators more input on the use of cost-sharing funds; include opportunity to consider environmental justice, data/study balance, *etc*
- Communicate with broader community of interested stakeholders regarding any threatened gages (not just the Cooperators directly involved in funding those specific gages)

Setting Program Priorities

- Give first priority to monitoring (*vs* investigations) when funds are limited
- Have more stakeholder input into setting the priorities of the CWP
- Implement national policy for state-by-state prioritization scheme (Cooperator's match rate could be based on importance of issues)

Funding Issues

- Re-establish 50-50 match in the CWP
- Continue to seek to full fund NSIP as a way to bring CWP closer to a 50-50 split

Cost Containment

- Control costs—examine 3 biggest costs for gaging and look for ways to save; include Cooperators and equipment suppliers in evaluation
- Be more creative in finding ways to reduce costs; USGS could provide QA and disseminate data collected by Cooperators
- Consider greater use of in-kind (especially if Cooperators provide certified operators, data)
- More coordination up front on how funds are being spent could help with cost efficiency (e.g., cooperator handle low-flow gaging)

Technical

- Give cooperators access to unit-value data
- Make internet access to data more user-friendly

- Improve QA for estimated peak flows

WHAT CAN STAKEHOLDERS DO TO IMPROVE THE CWP?

Communication

- Ask the Administration and Congress for additional support; organize our leaders for a “Water Day” in DC to inform their representatives and agency officials
- Become more organized and active as a Cooperator community; get more Cooperators involved
- Enhance public awareness of USGS water data programs.
- Use USGS data in user-friendly ways to increase recognition of CWP data.

Funding Issues between Cooperators and USGS

- Identify non-traditional Cooperators in private sector to fund gages (e.g., power companies)
- States (or other large Cooperators) might be able to reduce number of cost share agreements (and associated overhead expense) by consolidating groups of interested stakeholders; maybe by establishing a general fund to allowing any entity to contribute (e.g., recreation and environmental groups)
- Increase effort to coordinate contributions from multiple funding partners
- Increase Cooperator involvement in deciding which NSIP gages to support

Cost Containment

- Make greater use of in-kind services
- Cooperators could be involved in the USGS cost comparison exercise
- States could take over data collection and provide the data to USGS (“furnished records”)

Technical

- Stay current with the state of the art (e.g., in data transmission technology)

SOUTHEASTERN COASTAL STATES CWP COOPERATORS’ ROUNDTABLE 2007 HELD MARCH 28-29, 2007

Summary: In conjunction with the 2007 meeting of the Georgia Water Resources Conference, the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) held the first regional Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Cooperator’s Roundtable on the University of Georgia campus in Athens, GA on March 29. This was the first in a series of regional stakeholder meetings designed to present an overview of the USGS streamgaging and water science programs and to create a constructive opportunity for stakeholders to help guide those programs. The meeting included presentations by USGS staff on the purposes, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the current challenges facing it; presentation materials are accessible on the internet. Several Cooperator representatives described the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations and the benefits they bring to local water management. The meeting concluded with a discussion of ideas for strengthening the CWP and addressing the emerging water management issues.

Facilitated Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: Peter Evans divided the participants into two groups for a facilitated exploration of opportunities that both the USGS and the Cooperators might choose to improve the CWP. The two groups met for about half an hour, one lead by Peter and the other by Sue Lowry (ICWP’s Chair and Administrator of the Interstate Streams Division in the Wyoming State Engineers’ Office) to respond to two questions and then prioritize the results.

Recommendations for USGS consideration were:

- Improve outreach to local government, enhance USGS awareness of local issues and become a recognized participant in problem solving;
- Projects should be designed with more frequent “results” (e.g., reports, other deliverables), especially for long-term projects;
- Optimize the entire gaging network. Provide to local cooperators the background information so that they understand the decisions made by USGS when locating NSIP gages. Better coordination between the two programs as the local level is desirable. But having both programs is good so that some trade-offs can be made between the programs on specific gages.
- Enhance fact sheets describing investigation results in understandable terms, focus on informing the public;
- Anticipate next-steps and implications (e.g., for information needs, permitting, budget and other decisions) earlier in the project for future program and budget planning (e.g., design-build contracting);
- Promote this regional approach in having discussions with the cooperators.

Recommendations for CWP Cooperators' consideration were:

- Cooperators can do more to promote education/funding with Congress and the Administration. Also, look beyond the present set of supporters (e.g., to the National Association of County Officials, since in the southeast, water issues are very important and many county commissioners are very knowledgeable and would be willing to work on water issues when they are in DC or talking with their congressional contacts.
- Develop a better understanding of the CWP role, managers, decision cycles, resources, etc and the scope of USGS capabilities.
- Cooperators and the USGS need to work together to be more creative in financing streamgaging. New opportunities for in-kind services should be explored.
- Remember to invite USGS to more of the meetings where water issues are explored so they have better awareness and can contribute to the consideration of information needs and potential solutions. Cooperators can be of help in the information transfer working with USGS. Many cooperators participate in organizations beyond those with which USGS might typically participate. Cooperators should keep in mind opportunities to reach difference audiences with outreach on water resources research results.

CALIFORNIA CWP COOPERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

MONDAY, MAY 7, 2007

HYATT REGENCY SACRAMENTO

Summary: In conjunction with the spring meeting of the Association of California Water Agencies, the Interstate Council on Water Policy and the US Geological Survey (USGS) held the first California Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Cooperator's Roundtable in Sacramento on May 7. This roundtable was the second in a series of regional stakeholder meetings, the purpose of which is to extend information about the USGS streamgaging and water science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help guide those programs. The meeting program included presentations by USGS staff on the purposes,

history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the current challenges facing it. Several Cooperator representatives described the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made in California and the benefits they bring to local water management. The meeting concluded with an open discussion of ideas for strengthening the CWP and addressing the emerging water management issues in California.

Facilitated Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: Peter Evans divided the participants into two groups for a facilitated exploration of opportunities that both the USGS and the Cooperators might choose to improve the CWP. The two groups met for about an hour, one lead by Dennis Bostad (Sweetwater Authority) and the other by Eric Senter and Greg Smith (both with California DWR) to respond to two questions and then prioritize the results.

Sue Lowry, who chairs the ICWP Board of Directors and administers the Interstate Streams Program in the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, facilitated a brief summary and discussion of the highest-ranked suggestions from the two break-out groups.

The highlights for USGS consideration were:

- Restore 50/50 financial match (or reduce program cost, using newer hardware, software technologies, *etc*) so that Cooperators can afford more data and science;
- Further meetings between the USGS and groups of the CWP Cooperators to discuss agency and program management opportunities and challenges would be very helpful; embrace Cooperators more fully as partners, sharing more of budget, staffing, other key management challenges before significant decisions need to be made; provide annual summary of projects, programs to Cooperators.
- Provide more frequent reports on the subject and progress of interpretive studies; reduce the time required for internal review and deliver data quicker;
- Update the statewide flood frequency statistics at gaging stations in California (last updated about 30 years ago); also update streamflow and watershed characterizations;
- Provide additional technical assistance (e.g., facilitating access to the GOES, providing streamgage training more frequently, providing guidance and training in statistical and time series analytical methods, clarifying USGS QA/AC procedures, providing assistance to integrate data within a stream segment and reduce discrepancies, facilitating access to other published water resources data) and information (e.g., cross sections in downloadable form, data for unimpaired flows in mountain areas with tools to integrate/associate data from adjacent stations) to Cooperators; a watershed discussion among stakeholders would help promote awareness of emerging issues, shared concerns and the relevant science;
- Add older data to online databases, provide statistical tools for analysis and interpretation;

Highlights for CWP Cooperators' consideration were:

- Our legislative and congressional leaders need a better understanding of the value that the CWP and NSIP have in our ability to make intelligent decisions for our communities and in our relation with other states; also the financial burden it places on our agencies if federal funding for these programs is insufficient;
- Organize public/media events around water issues in which USGS experts can present their science as a means to increase public awareness of water issues and the USGS contribution to understanding and solving water problems;
- Develop a model or standard agreement for use between California state agencies and the USGS to streamline internal review (especially with the AG's Office)

- Take more initiative to learn CWP managers, opportunities and difficulties;
- Co-locate staff to enhance communication and understanding between USGS and Cooperators;

TEXAS COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE FOR THE USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

AUSTIN, TX

What can USGS do to improve their service?

- Better communication of current and ongoing CWP projects
- Local/Regional meetings to discuss USGS ongoing projects in local area...Cooperators possibly host such a meeting?
- USGS & cooperators could partner to organize meetings to share ideas, technical needs and challenges facing region (communication awareness)
- USGS need(s) help developing 5-year plan, science directions of cooperators for the next 5 years
- Need local forums to help educate stakeholders on USGS capabilities
- Better use of Webcasts to provide project information, expertise, capabilities
- Better "marketing" of capabilities, Cooperators don't know what you can do
- Better referencing of reports (accessibility)
- FAQ on process for acquiring USGS services
- Better info on who is funding gages/studies
 - List cooperators who pay for gage on gage website (and add logo's)
- Make web site and project material more appealing to public, revise and update website, to hard to find information
- Need "redneck press here" button (Laurie's suggestion)
- Graphic-based web site for getting water data
- Publicize/Communicate happenings throughout the USGS
- What are future focuses of USGS, what new Science Directions and Capabilities
- What experience does the USGS have in Watershed Protection Planning?

Emerging issues

- "Certification" for water data collection training program for cooperators staffs
- Tarrant Regional Water District has a network of streamgages and staff to collect data, to expensive, will have USGS more involved in the future after staff retirements
- Need 3rd party to look at feasibility of involving cooperators in data collection activities to reduce costs.
- What work can cooperators perform to cut gage costs?
- How can USGS lower costs by using local help?

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN STATES CWP COOPERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE

NOVEMBER 1-2, 2007

FIVE FLAGS HOLIDAY INN, DUBUQUE, IA

Summary: In cooperation with the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, the Interstate Council on Water Policy and the US Geological Survey organized the first Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Cooperator's Roundtable for the five Upper Mississippi River Basin States in Dubuque, IA. This roundtable was the fourth in a series of regional stakeholder meetings, the purpose of which is to extend information about the USGS streamgaging and cooperative water science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

The program included presentations by USGS staff on the purposes, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the challenges facing it. Several Cooperator representatives presented excellent descriptions of the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made and the benefits they bring to state and local water management. The reception and exploration of the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium were very enjoyable and the meeting concluded with a discussion (and ranking) of ideas for building a stronger Cooperative Water Program with USGS.

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants divided into two groups to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The two groups met for about an hour, one lead by Kent Lokkesmoe (Minnesota DNR) and the other by Greg Good (Illinois EPA) to respond to two questions and prioritize the results. The highest ranking recommendations were:

For USGS consideration:

- Get back to 50% match and increase USGS funding for new work;
- Reduce HQ overhead cost;
- Enhance interagency coordination of data collection;
- Improve sediment monitoring and analysis program;
- Better recognize synergy of USGS and state monitoring programs;
- Simplify and reduce cost of reports and consider a new methods for producing reports quickly, especially for small studies;
- Stay on cutting edge, advancing the available technology, and continue technology transfer to Cooperators,
- Continue pushing for more timely release of data and information on web, final and provisional;
- Hold regular, statewide meetings with Cooperator community to review needs, opportunities, priorities;

For CWP Cooperators' consideration:

- Advocate full NSIP implementation and continuing increases for the CWP;
- Cooperators can/need to be more vocal with policy makers /influential people;
- Promote base funding for USGS to separate overhead from CWP cost share agreements;
- Improve accessibility of data for electronic transfer of information;
- Discuss streamgaging issues and priorities with more organizations and data users more often;

- Identify and promote awareness of more sources of water data; deal with funding implication;
- Help USGS avoid CWP agreements that are too small to be cost-effective;

UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN STATES CWP COOPERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE

AUGUST 26-27, 2008

THE HISTORIC PLAINS HOTEL, CHEYENNE, WY

Summary: In cooperation with the Missouri River Association of States & Tribes, the Interstate Council on Water Policy and the US Geological Survey organized the first Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Cooperator's Roundtable for the five Upper Missouri River Basin States in Cheyenne, WY. This roundtable was the fourth in a series of regional stakeholder meetings, the purpose of which is to extend information about the USGS streamgaging and cooperative water science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

The program included presentations by USGS staff on the purposes, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the challenges facing it. Several Cooperator representatives presented excellent descriptions of the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made and the benefits they bring to state and local water management.

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants divided into two groups to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The two groups met for about an hour, one lead by Tracy Streeter (Kansas Water Office) and the other by Garland Erbele (South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources) to respond to two questions and prioritize the results. Those questions and the combined results are available, but the highest ranking recommendations were:

What can the USGS do to improve the CWP?

- "Market" the USGS products and the value of data collection to Congress, demonstrating the importance of CWP funding needs and request more federal funding for both the CWP and NSIP; expand awareness beyond the water managers
- Offer more expert availability to Cooperators in program and issue exploration to improve the anticipation of data needs and increase probability that baseline will be available in early stages of decision making
- Expand and utilize CWP flexibility to lower cost and collect more data related to specific Cooperator's needs; examine (in an open discussion with the Cooperators) the viability of "different data qualities" and allowing non-USGS staff to collect data and maintain gages in accord with USGS standards so that the data can be published the same as USGS data –also water quality analyses
- Establish competitive grant program to help Cooperators extend data collection and meet USGS standards, (similar to the Cooperative Mapping Program; offer 50:50 cost share)
- Better delivery of data and study results (from provisional to final) on schedule
- Maintain/expand research role
- Continue adding to and improving the NWIS –web capabilities & products
- Provide better explanation of the study and data collection cost and progress
- Keep flexibility & decisions at Water Science Center level for studies/data mix

What action should the Cooperators consider to improve the CWP?

- Advocate for CWP & NSIP funding increases Bring USGS staff/message to the news media Get congressional hearings set on basic data collection; be more strategic in our efforts
- Stay more actively involved in the interpretive studies as they progress
- Engage USGS more often, even informally, to explore issues & options – enhance the interpretation of USGS data in context of management decisions, improve the anticipation of issues & data needs, whether it leads to interpretive studies or not
- Be more aware of USGS data collection and processing protocols to increase consistency); need USGS guidance on extent- of-compliance
- Organize regular statewide Cooperator forums to bring current and new funding partners to the table, increase shared understanding of capabilities, needs and opportunities and to identify and explore opportunities to improve CWP efficiency

What should USGS & Cooperators do to enhance data compatibility across networks?

- Establish a water data portal –to help identify other useful sources of data

OHIO RIVER BASIN STATES CWP COOPERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE

SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2008

CINCINNATI, OH

Overview: In cooperation with the Ohio River Basin Commission (ORBC), the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) organized the first Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Cooperator's Roundtable for the five of the Ohio River Basin States in Cincinnati, OH. This roundtable was the sixth in a series of regional stakeholder meetings around the US, the purpose of which is to extend information about the USGS streamgaging and cooperative water science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants divided into two groups to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The two groups met for about an hour, one lead by Larry Feazell (Ohio River Basin Commission) and the other by John Stark (The Nature Conservancy) to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. Those questions and the combined results are available, but and the highest ranking recommendations were:

What can the USGS do to improve the CWP?

- Organize more state monitoring councils to strengthen support for funding, identify opportunities to share costs, identify needs and agree on priorities; make sure Cooperators are aware of USGS Science Strategy
- Explain the value of the CWP data collection and interpretive studies more clearly and make the results more accessible; newsletters, presentations to community groups, briefings for local agencies and officials, attendance in watershed group meetings were suggested;
- Look for opportunities to share cost of interpretive studies among WSCs, especially where transfer value is stronger, e.g., interstate waters; also, streamline/standardize design for interpretive studies to increase administrative efficiency

What can the Cooperators do to improve the CWP?

- Do better in explaining value & importance of CWP to our congressional delegation and to state and local policy makers; work with USGS to “get the word out” to public and local policy makers; press releases, outreach events
- Build stronger awareness among Cooperators and with OFAs of their respective needs and expand collaboration among Cooperators in designing CWP studies and the development of interpretive tools; look for opportunities to share interpretive tools
- Highlight USGS involvement when using CWP data & study results in program and project decisions

What should USGS & Cooperators do to enhance data compatibility across networks?

- Expand awareness of National Water Quality Monitoring Council and National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) –and other efforts to establish and use common standards
- Work with USGS and others to engage all the stakeholders in basinwide coordination groups; consider developing & supporting statewide Monitoring Councils

COOPERATIVE WATER MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT IN FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 12-13, 2008

ORLANDO, FL

Overview: In cooperation with the US Geological Survey (USGS), the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) organized this Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Roundtable for stakeholders in Florida. This roundtable was the seventh in a series of regional stakeholder meetings designed to provide information about the USGS water data and science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

The program included presentations by USGS staff about the purpose, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the challenges facing it. Cooperator representatives presented excellent descriptions of the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made in the fulfillment of local water resource responsibilities.

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants divided into two groups of about 25 each to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The groups worked independently for about 90 minutes, one lead by Elizabeth Thomas (SJRWMD) and the other by Adam Munson (SWFWMD) to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. Those questions and the combined results are available, and the highest ranking recommendations were as follows:

What actions should the USGS consider to improve the CWP?

- Implement NAVD ‘88
- Shorten turnaround for data delivery and study reporting;
- Increase regular communication with Cooperators (improve accounting transparency), show how they’re getting their money’s worth; request Cooperator comments on draft FISC Science Communication Strategy; schedule regular meetings in WMD offices for information exchange;
- Improve “marketing/outreach” of monitoring and science capabilities for Cooperators’ managers and governing boards; hold regional meetings annually with all stakeholders, including all who use the data and science; help policy makers be more aware when USGS is (or could be) contributing to

decision making abilities; make study results easier for the public to find and to understand/apply; sponsor public meetings to present monitoring and interpretive study results;

- Increase availability of USGS training to Cooperators, formalize programs and promotion of training schedules
- Increase CWP funding to match Cooperators' investments 50:50
- Fund data collection, not studies

What action should the Cooperators consider to improve the CWP?

- Invite USGS-FISC leadership for periodic meetings, information exchange and introduction to Cooperator leadership; involve USGS more directly and in planning and designing projects, studies, etc;
- Help leaders within Cooperator organizations to recognize and appreciate the value of USGS contributions to their projects, studies, operational decisions, etc; acknowledge USGS as source of data and science when presenting issues/decisions to the public, policy makers, etc;
- Become more active for support of funding; energize statewide organizations, develop grassroots effort
- Encourage blog writers to highlight recent USGS studies and projects

How can we coordinate monitoring efforts to increase the value of all the data for use in interpretive studies and program decisions?

- Support existing efforts, e.g., FL Water Resource Monitoring Council, where stakeholders could agree on minimum standards, metadata –before integration; meet periodically to review/refine and promote plans, progress & needs (e.g., the Oceans Council “GAMES,” ACF bi-weekly teleconference);
- Invite Cooperators to USGS coordination meetings to share and review data collection plans
- Establish data portal where all data can be accessed (e.g. “FREAC”); establish a data warehouse (e.g., Storet, Sofia, DBHydro); need to get funding to support reasonable level of quality and consistency; identify and promote a single agency (state or federal?) to gather and distribute data and study results; super site – multi-parameter, prioritization
- Require data “contribution” from local projects in exchange for funding;
- Establish an electronic bulletin board for new monitoring projects, studies, etc;

MID-ATLANTIC REGION COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE FOR THE USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009

PHILADELPHIA HISTORIC DIST

Overview: In cooperation with the US Geological Survey (USGS), the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) organized this Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Roundtable for stakeholders in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. This roundtable was the eighth in a series of regional stakeholder meetings designed to provide information about the USGS water data and science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

The program included presentations by USGS staff about the purpose, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the challenges facing it. Cooperator representatives provided excellent descriptions of the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made in the fulfillment of local and regional water planning and management responsibilities.

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants divided into three groups of about 25 each to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The groups worked independently to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. Those questions and the specific results are available in the full meeting summary, but the highest ranking recommendations were as follows:

What actions should the USGS consider to improve the CWP?

- Provide reviews of interpretive studies faster, produce more informal products prior to formal report delivery; make data more easily accessible
- Promote broader recognition and use of transferable tools (e.g., StreamStats); more rapid transfer of new technologies; continue development of new technologies in the interest of cost savings
- Fully fund NSIP and return the CWP to 50:50 match
- Expand Cooperator base, identify and encourage smaller Cooperators and other users of information
- Increase effort to include Cooperators input into NSIP design and prioritization for the funding of gages
- Assign a person as liaison, single point of contact, for key regions and for science themes; develop regional inventories of skills, equipment, ability to support other Water Science Centers, e.g., Regional Workforce Study
- Stop putting headquarters' overhead onto CWP cost (e.g., reduce "business style" accounting for projects); identify data management as an element of O&M
- Give Cooperators credit for in-kind services in CWP requirements

What action should the Cooperators consider to improve the CWP?

- Improve decision maker (Congress, state legislatures and local) awareness of USGS monitoring and interpretive science, their importance to water management and society; coordinate the message and delivery timing by as many groups as possible; make the USGS role and contributions to Cooperator decisions more visible to the public, legislators and congressional representatives; highlight the large number of (multiple) uses of the same data and studies that support different Cooperators and communities; make opportunity with incoming Administration officials to improve interagency communication and coordination
- Highlight the importance of monitoring and interpretive studies funding in our state and local agency budgets; develop streamgage-specific line items; enhance message delivery to state legislatures; specify conditions in permits and dockets, set up trust fund to accumulate fines and judgments to support long-term operation of streamgages (e.g., Marston shale);
- Use regional Cooperator meetings to share assessment of needs, opportunities, etc; Collaborate in defining tools and products needed from USGS, and in sharing cost; actively prioritize Cooperators needs, like WV Monitoring Council; communicate more regularly among Cooperators, involve new Cooperator groups (e.g. private sector) in Cooperator base; states should identify a "point person"

How can we coordinate monitoring efforts within the region to increase the value of all the collected data for use in interpretive studies and program decisions?

- agencies should conduct a gaps analysis and communicate what is available, from who & where; coordinate the design of monitoring network among agencies at a regional scale and develop (agree

- on) standards for metadata and data collection to support data clearinghouse, data portal; apply consistent methods and protocols to yield comparable results; develop techniques for evaluating data and comparability to normalize data collected by different sources;
- Invest in new technologies (e.g., remote sensing, acoustic Doppler, etc);
 - Identify key management systems, key objectives and related monitoring needs and data gaps; and
 - Collect water use data the same way we do water availability and water quality data, for national and regional comparability.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE FOR THE USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 2-3, 2009

TACOMA, WA

Overview: In cooperation with the US Geological Survey (USGS), the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) organized this Cooperative Water Program (CWP) Roundtable for stakeholders in Idaho, Oregon and Washington with advisory support from the Washington State Water Resources Association, The River Network, the Oregon Water Resources Congress, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and the Idaho Water Users Association. This roundtable was the ninth in a series of regional stakeholder meetings designed to provide information about the USGS water data and science programs and create an opportunity for stakeholders to help strengthen those programs.

The program included presentations by USGS staff about the purpose, history and capabilities of the CWP and some of the challenges facing it. Cooperator representatives presented excellent descriptions of the scientific contribution that the CWP data collection and interpretive investigations have made in the fulfillment of water resource planning and management responsibilities in the region.

RESULTS FROM THE DISCUSSION OF OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

Following a series of panel presentations, we discussed budget pressures that have limited the USGS ability to share the cost of data collection and interpretive studies on the traditional 50:50 basis and the mounting pressure on state and local agency budgets. We also discussed the USGS sensitivity to conducting interpretive studies in competition with experts in the private sector. Several factors identified previously (e.g., their competence in such a wide range of geotechnical sciences and research capabilities, their independence and reputation for impartiality as a federal agency and the cost-share) were repeated, but we also discussed the time frame available for decision making and the distinction between issues that require an advance in the basic science and those that involve application of reasonably well-established analytical skills.

The participants divided into three groups of 20-25 each to explore opportunities for both the USGS and the Cooperators to improve the CWP. The three groups worked independently for about 90 minutes to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. Those questions and the combined results are available on the internet, but the highest ranking recommendations were as follows:

What actions should the USGS consider doing to improve the CWP?

- USGS should convene regular advisory committees (and less formal meetings) to share science, enhance understanding and relations with Cooperators on a topical/regional basis, to seek opportunities that are mutually beneficial and get partners more engaged in the planning and management decisions; this would also help USGS maintain awareness of emerging needs;

- Place greater priority in budget requests to restore 50:50 cost-share capability in CWP and full funding for the NSIP;
- Collect more data available from other agencies and make available through the NWIS or a portal;
- Make better use of informal data collection methods (e.g., volunteers, web cams, etc.); and
- Provide more timely access to interim and final results from both data collection and interpretive studies.

What action should the Cooperators consider doing to improve the CWP?

- Remind your congressional and state legislative delegations of the CWP and NSIP benefits and needs so that appropriate support (from federal, state and other sources) can be secured; and
- Help with the formation of state monitoring councils and make sure USGS clearly understands Cooperator needs; invite USGS into Cooperator meetings to help WSC leadership identify and understand issues early.

How can we coordinate monitoring efforts within the region to increase the value of all the data for use in interpretive studies and program decisions?

- The USGS, Cooperators and other stakeholders should collaborate in the organization and support for statewide or watershed monitoring councils that could inventory water monitoring programs and promote a set of useful standards, protocols, meta-data, etc. to reduce discrepancies among the data sets developed by different agencies, etc.;
- A portal should be established, funded and maintained to provide efficient access to water data from a wide variety of sources; and
- If the monitoring councils become focused on specific tasks (or operate at a very technical level), the USGS and Cooperators should organize less formal meetings on a regular basis to bring various agencies and organizations that collect and/or need water data to facilitate the coordination of their needs, plans and investments.