



**USGS'S COOPERATIVE WATER
PROGRAM (CWP)
COOPERATOR ROUNDTABLE RESULTS**



**THESE FRIENDS
SUPPORT OUR CAUSE**



**2ND NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' ROUNDTABLE
FOR THE
USGS COOPERATIVE WATER PROGRAM
JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 1, 2006 IN AUSTIN, TX**

The results from 5 independent break-out groups' discussion of opportunities and selection of priorities are summarized below. USGS staff participated in the discussion but opted not to participate in the selection of the most important recommendations, hoping to get a more clear indication of the Cooperators' perspective on the value of these opportunities.

WHAT CAN USGS DO TO IMPROVE THE CWP?

Communication with Stakeholders

- Involve the Cooperators more directly in decisions concerning use of cost-shared funds; meet annually with all Cooperators to enable them to learn and guide priorities at national level for monitoring and studies, to improve efficient use of resources and reduce program cost and agree on CWP policies;
- Engage Cooperators more directly in open, state-by-state prioritization (Cooperator's match rate could be based on importance of issues)
- Communicate with all stakeholders, not just the paying Cooperators.

Improve Funding & Cost Containment

- 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.
- Focus on 3 biggest expense elements in reducing cost of NSIP and CWP; include Cooperators and equipment suppliers in evaluation
- More federal agencies (and other interests) should pay fair share.
- Consider in-kind credit where Cooperators provide certified operators and data.

Fund Data Collection First

- Give higher priority to data collection, while CWP capability is limited by funding, to minimize gaps in important monitoring records.

Improve Data Access

- Make internet access to data more user-friendly.

WHAT CAN COOPERATORS DO TO IMPROVE THE CWP?

Coordinate Cooperators

- Organize and communicate better among ourselves to give USGS better understanding of Cooperators' needs, priorities and their ability to contribute funds & in-kind.

Promote CWP Appreciation

- Organize more "state water day" events to inform Members of Congress and federal agency leaders.
- Increase the grassroots public awareness effort about the value of water resource data.
- Give CWP and NSIP credit for data whenever it is included in reports, presentations, *etc.*

Improve CWP Efficiency

- Participate in joint working group with USGS to examine and cut program costs.
- Increase in-kind contributions to decrease cost to collect data.
- Consolidate smaller joint-funding agreements under a larger agreement.
- Take initiative to coordinate with the USGS on funding and planning.
- Take over data collection and provide the data to USGS ("furnished records")

Improve CWP Funding Base

- Inform and engage more Cooperators, including local agencies, businesses and other non-traditional stakeholders to help fund streamgages.
- Be advocate for USGS at federal level (programs & funding); inform Members of Congress about the value that NSIP and CWP have and the need for reliable funding.
- Propose a general fund that would enable any supportive entity to contribute funding.

SOUTHEASTERN COASTAL STATES CWP COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE 2007

HELD MARCH 28-29, 2007

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GEORGIA WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE
UGA CAMPUS IN ATHENS, GA

Facilitated Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: the participants split into two groups for a facilitated discussion of opportunities that either the USGS or the Cooperators could pursue to improve the CWP. The two groups met independently for about half an hour, one lead by Peter Evans (ICWP Executive Director) 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. Sue Lowry facilitated a brief summary and discussion of the highest-ranked suggestions from the two break-out groups.

Recommendations for USGS consideration:

1. Improve outreach to local government, enhance USGS awareness of local issues and become a recognized participant in problem solving;
2. Projects should be designed with more frequent "results" (e.g., reports, other deliverables), especially for long-term projects;
3. 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.
4. Enhance fact sheets describing investigation results in understandable terms, focus on informing the public;
5. 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);
6. Promote this regional approach in having discussions with the cooperators.

Recommendations for CWP Cooperators' consideration:

1. 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.

2. Develop a better understanding of the CWP role, managers, decision cycles, resources, etc and the scope of USGS capabilities.
3. Cooperators and the USGS need to work together to be more creative in financing streamgaging. New opportunities for in-kind services should be explored.
4. 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

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ACWA SPRING 2007 MEETING MAY 8-11, 2007

Facilitated Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants separated 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. Those questions and the the highest-ranked suggestions from the combined results are:

For USGS consideration:

1. Restore 50/50 financial match (or reduce program cost, using newer hardware, software technologies, *etc*) so that Cooperators can afford more data and science;
2. 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.
3. Provide more frequent reports on the subject and progress of interpretive studies; reduce the time required for internal review and deliver data quicker;
4. Update the statewide flood frequency statistics at gaging stations in California (last updated about 30 years ago); also update streamflow and watershed characterizations;
5. 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;

6. Add older data to online databases, provide statistical tools for analysis and interpretation;

For CWP Cooperators' consideration:

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. 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)
4. Take more initiative to learn CWP managers, opportunities and difficulties;
5. Co-locate staff to enhance communication and understanding between USGS and Cooperators;

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN STATES CWP COOPERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 1-2, 2007

FIVE FLAGS HOLIDAY INN, DUBUQUE, IA

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. Those questions and the highest ranking recommendations from the combined results are:

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 streamgauge 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 COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE 2008

HELD AUGUST 26-27, 2008

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MISSOURI RIVER ASSOCIATION OF STATES & TRIBES
THE PLAINS HOTEL IN CHEYENNE, WYOMING

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The Roundtable participants divided into two groups to discuss ways that the USGS and the Cooperators could improve the CWP. They met separately for one hour, one lead by Garland Eberle (South Dakota Chief Engineer) and the other by Tracy Streeter (Director, Kansas Water Office) to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. The highest ranking recommendations from the combined results are:

What can the Cooperators do to improve the CWP?

- Advocate full support for NSIP implementation and for the CWP, including involvement of USGS in public meetings, outreach to the news media and public and providing testimony to congressional delegations and committee hearings;
- Stay more actively involved in interpretive studies throughout design and implementation;
- Involve USGS more consistently in the exploration of issues and program/project options, use CWP data and studies more deliberately in making policy and setting priorities; and
- Initiate periodic statewide Cooperator meetings for discussion of needs, resources and opportunities.

What can the USGS do to improve the CWP?

- Deliver better reports to Congress and to the public concerning CWP progress, challenges and the cost involved in making decisions without sufficient data and science to plan and design intelligently;

- Anticipate future resource management and protection issues so that baseline data collection can be started earlier and more effectively;
- Be more flexible in defining the data set collected at some stations to serve actual needs at lower cost; and
- Deliver data and study results more efficiently and provide better explanation of cost and schedule.

What can the USGS & Cooperators do to enhance the compatibility of water data collected by different agencies?

- Establish a water data portal to help users identify and compare other useful sources of data.

OHIO RIVER BASIN STATES CWP COOPERATORS' ROUNDTABLE 2008

HELD SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2008

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ORBC & ORSANCO

THE HOLIDAY INN IN CINCINNATI, OHIO

Break-Out Group Discussion of Opportunities & Priorities: The participants split into two groups to identify options for improving the CWP. They met in separate rooms for an hour, one lead by Larry Fezell (ORBC Director) and the other by to respond to three questions and prioritize the results. The recommendations that got the highest priority are:

What can the Cooperators do to improve the CWP?

- Inform their respective congressional delegations on the value & importance of the CWP and highlight USGS involvement when presenting decisions or evaluating alternatives that depend on CWP data & studies; and
- Expand collaboration among Cooperators in designing CWP studies, interpretive tools, etc; look for opportunities to share interpretive tools.

What can the USGS do to improve the CWP?

- Present a better explanation of CWP value to the public, local decision makers and legislators; look for opportunities to brief legislators and organize group visits to their offices;
- Look for opportunities to share the cost of interpretive studies among Water Science Centers, especially where there is more transferable value (e.g., interstate waters);
- Focus on emerging contaminants, where good science will be required soon;
- Make sure Cooperators are aware of USGS Science Strategy; and
- Streamline the design of interpretive studies to increase efficiency and reduce overhead.

What can the USGS & Cooperators do to enhance the compatibility of water data collected by different agencies?

- Expand awareness of National Water Quality Monitoring Council and NADP –and others – efforts to establish and use common standards; and
- USGS & Cooperators should engage other agencies in basinwide coordination groups, develop & support statewide Monitoring Councils; and compare results from various methods.