

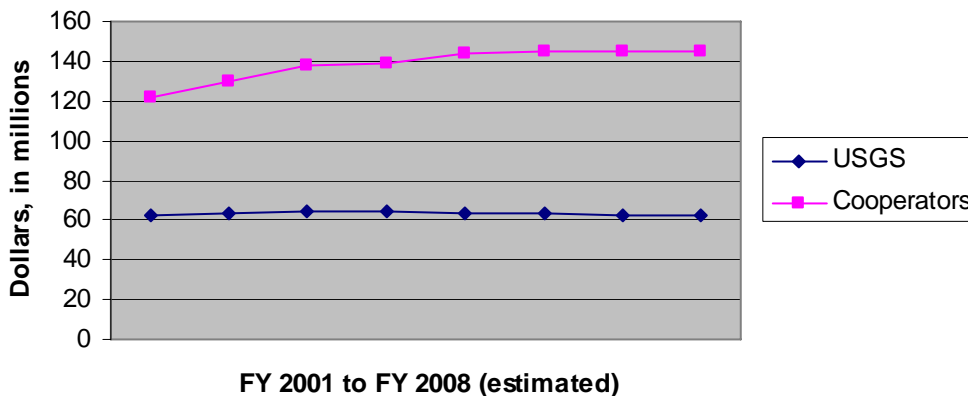


The U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Water Program FY 2008

The USGS Cooperative Water Program (CWP), the largest single source of hydrologic data and information in the country, is a 112-year-old, jointly funded partnership between the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and State, Tribal, and local cooperators to collect water data and conduct interpretive hydrologic studies in support of sound water-management decisions. The USGS and about 1400 State, Tribal, regional, and local government partners jointly fund costs for the program. Further information on the CWP is available at <http://water.usgs.gov/coop>.

Fiscal limitations are reflected in the funding ratio for the CWP, which has evolved from its original level of 50:50 to the present where non-Federal cooperators provide 67 percent of program and the USGS provides 33 percent.

Recent Funding History, USGS Cooperative Water Program



The FY 2008 proposed appropriation for the USGS Cooperative Water Program is \$62.38 million, which reflects a reduction of \$2.2 million from the proposed FY 2007 level in the USGS contribution to interpretive studies and an allowance of an additional \$2.41 million to cover the impacts of inflation. The FY 2008 reduction is built on a similar reduction in FY 2007, resulting in a total decline of \$4.2 million from FY 2006 enacted funding. The \$4.2 million reduction in USGS funding for interpretive studies will be accompanied by a loss of as much as \$8.4 million in cooperator matching funds. The USGS anticipates that this combined \$12.6 million reduction would result in a net loss of 100-120 hydrologic investigations due to start in 2008.

While we cannot predict which specific new studies would not be funded under the proposed 2008 budget for the USGS Cooperative Water Program, the following examples typify the type of investigations that are currently underway.

Water Availability: The availability of water to meet the needs of growing communities, agriculture, energy production, and critical ecosystems continues to be a nationwide challenge. The Cooperative Water Program provides essential hydrologic information needed to assess the quantity of water available to communities to support water-supply planning and allocation to a wide range of users. In 2008, the Cooperative Water Program will support thousands of stream gages and ground-water observation wells that define the availability of surface and ground waters, and conduct numerous hydrologic investigations needed to evaluate the quantity of available ground water. A recent example of this work includes completion of a sophisticated computer ground-water flow model of the Virginia Coastal Plain, an important water supply for over 2 million people. This work includes detailed characterization of the newly discovered Chesapeake Bay Impact Crater and its influence on the regional ground-water system. See <http://va.water.usgs.gov/projects/va089.html>

Drinking Water Quality: Providing clean, safe drinking water to citizens is a high national priority, and the Cooperative Water Program works with State and local governments to assess the quality of the Nation's drinking water supply. In 2008, the USGS will work with the California Water Resources Control Board to continue an assessment of 116 of California's priority ground-water basins. With many partners, the USGS is developing an understanding of natural and human factors that affect ground-water quality, providing early indications of potential water-quality problems, and contributing to the long-term management and protection of ground-water resources affecting one in eight Americans. See <http://ca.water.usgs.gov/gama/>

Ecosystems: One of the most pressing ecosystem questions that the Nation faces is how to preserve and enhance the quality of aquatic and riparian ecosystems in the face of increasing pressure to withdraw surface and ground water. Under the Cooperative Water Program, the USGS is working with State and local agencies to evaluate the instream flow requirements of aquatic ecosystems. This effort entails the development of both new information and new techniques. A recent notable example is the USGS effort to develop a Hydroecological Integrity Assessment Process for New Jersey, which should provide a prototype for broad applicability nationwide. A report describing this new tool can be found at <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/products/publications/21598/21598.pdf>.