



A Briefing on Key Water Resource Priorities: FUNDING INTERIOR'S WATER DATA AND SCIENCE PROGRAM

What is ICWP?

- Founded in 1959, the ICWP is the national organization of state, interstate, regional, and other water resources agencies - the nation's water managers. It is the mission of ICWP to enhance the stewardship of the nation's water resources.
- ICWP's scope of interest includes water data collection and management, water infrastructure and dam safety, water resource planning, flood and drought preparedness and resilience, watershed management, nonpoint source pollution control, water conservation, wetlands protection, and endangered species and habitat. Within this context, the relationship and effective allocation of responsibilities among local, state, interstate and federal agencies are of particular interest.

What do we want?

We urge your support to enable the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to fully implement its design for the National Streamgauge Monitoring Network, which includes the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) and the Cooperative Water Program (CWP). While we acknowledge that the federal budget needs to adapt to economic concerns, the repeated cost of storm, flooding and drought impacts make reliable data and science more important than ever in protecting our communities, businesses and infrastructure investments.

Why are we concerned?

America's need to understand and anticipate streamflow, groundwater levels, tidal surge, precipitation and water quality changes is increasing every year in relation to our planning for public safety, land use and economic development. Our aging infrastructure and ecological commitments magnify those needs. Unfortunately, the federal funds appropriated to Interior/USGS for the National Streamgauge Monitoring Network have not kept up with this need (or with the approximately \$85 million contributed by over 800 non-federal cost-share partners).

Concern for the long-term continuity and reliability of our national streamgaging data led the Congress to ask USGS for a solution in 1998. The NSIP was designed by USGS and authorized by Congress in 2009 to operate as a federally-funded "backbone" for the National Streamgauge Network necessary to fulfill 5 specific national purposes. The National Research Council's Committee on Water Resources Research evaluated the NSIP design and concluded that it will provide "a sound, well-conceived program that meets the nation's needs for streamflow measurement, interpretation, and information delivery."

Unfortunately, about 25% of the NSIP gages are still not active due to insufficient federal funding. In 2014, the highest-priority streamgages were funded by the NSIP, the CWP, and USGS partners; 976 of these streamgages were fully funded by the USGS (through NSIP), increasing the number of USGS fully funded streamgages by 182 due to the \$6M increase that Congress appropriated for FY-2014 for expansion of the National Streamgage Network. Even with that \$6M and the \$1.2M that Congress added for FY-2015, 70% of the active NSIP streamgages still rely upon a patchwork of funding, a significant portion of which comes from non-federal agencies.

Why is this important?

The USGS National Streamgage Monitoring Network, approximately 8,100 streamgages, serves the federal need and provides the national benchmark for an integrated monitoring network and a proven source of reliable scientific information that we all need to support well-informed decision making in the public and private sectors across a wide variety of water resource planning, design and operational functions, including:

- monitoring compliance with federal compact and Native American trust responsibilities;
- designing bridges, dams, levees, and other infrastructure;
- forecasting storm surge, flood and drought conditions and issuing emergency advisories;
- identifying flood-prone areas to protect lives and property and reduce disaster relief expenses;
- protecting water rights;
- managing reservoir releases for water supply, irrigation, hydropower, environmental and navigation uses;
- monitoring and protecting water quality, fisheries, wetlands and endangered species;
- providing safety information for boating and other water-based recreation;
- analyzing climate trends and evaluating community and regional response options; and
- projecting future water needs and availability for agricultural, municipal and industrial uses.

In summary, Congress needs the National Streamgage Monitoring Network as much as the Federal agencies and the rest of America's water community: to evaluate implementation of many federal reservoir projects, numerous tribal agreements and international treaties, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.

How to contact ICWP (www.icwp.org):

Our Missouri Office

3812 Cedar Lane
Columbia, MO 65201

Ryan Mueller, Executive Director
(573) 303-6644
rpmueller1@mchsi.com

Our Washington DC Office

505 North Ivy St.
Arlington, VA 22220

Peter Evans, Senior Policy Advisor
(703) 243-7383
phe@riverswork.com