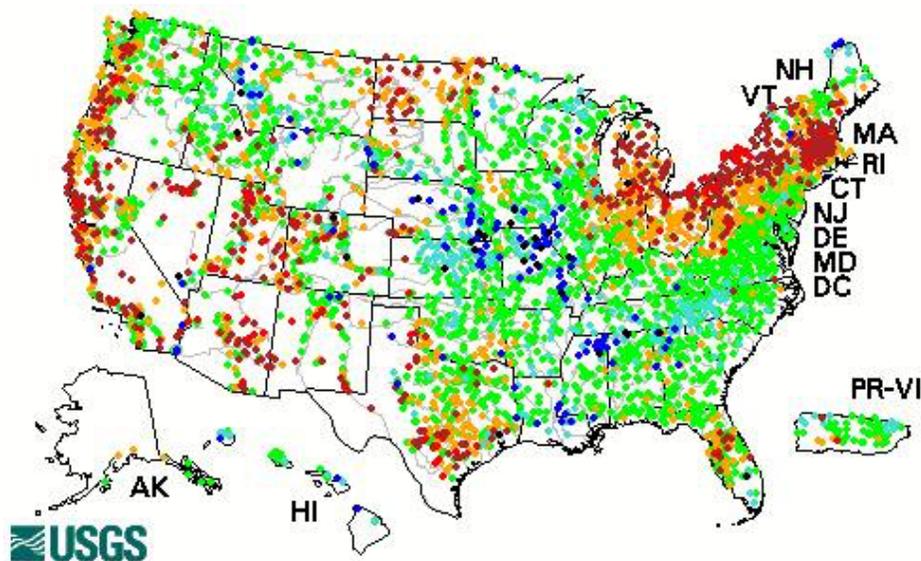


USGS streamgages play extremely significant roles in making critical decisions around **public safety and the economy**. From **communicating flooding hazards and drought planning to managing construction** and promoting **economic well-being**, the data are crucial. These streamgages directly impact public health, safety, and economic development. Streamgages are also essential in navigating **climate change**, as consistent data aid in understanding the impacts on national water supply (in volume of water received, timing, and year-to-year variability).



USGS scientists taking velocity and depth measurements

The streamgage network consists of over **11,300 streamgages in lakes, reservoirs and streams**. The vital data are used by governmental organizations, private industries, and the general public. In 2020, there were **887 million requests for streamgage reports**. Streamgages in the USGS networks are funded using federal appropriated funds for Federal Priority Streamgages or Cooperative Matching Funds in combination with funds from more than 1,400 partners.



Map of current streamgages—streamflow compared to average for that gage

Water flow and availability data from streamgages are consistent, fast, and highly coveted. USGS Streamgage data have been used in a diverse array of projects, including:

- Flood forecasting and response
- Drought planning and resiliency
- Bridge, levee and road design
- Water-treatment plants
- Management of freshwater for drinking, irrigation, and energy
- Industrial, recreational and ecosystem health uses
- National, state, local, and tribal economic well-being
- Direct safety alerts, especially during natural disasters such as hurricanes
- Safer boating, paddling, fishing, hunting and other recreational uses on-river
- Water supply administration



Issue: Due to budget shortfalls, gages once supported by the USGS are being lost. As funding levels budget have plateaued over the past years, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and expand the streamgage network. Expansion of the streamgaging system is imperative to making better predictions. *As “models and predictive capabilities have advanced over the years, we’re starting to exceed in the modeling what we have observations to support. The density of observations starts to get too low to calibrate and validate the new high-fidelity models that we need to project what water will look like in the next few weeks to the next few years” (Don Cline, USGS).*

Funding Support Needed

- \$28.7 M for FY 2022 for the Federal Priority Streamgages to address the shortfall resulting from gages lost due to flatlined budget since 2016. This would allow for adding some new gages to the FPS network.
- \$33.0 M for FY2022 for the portion of Cooperative Matching Funds used to support streamgaging.
- \$28.1 M for NGWOS and Data Delivery Modernization, which will allow for the addition of new pilot basins, and to modernize delivery systems.
- For comparison, the USGS estimates that \$130 M would be needed to fully build out and harden the Federal Priorities Streamgaging Network.

For more information, contact: **SUE LOWRY, Executive Director**
Interstate Council on Water Policy
Sue@icwp.org
307-630-5804