

IWG Topical Sub-Workgroup Proposal

Topic

Evaluation of United States Geological Survey (USGS) Data Collection Programs to support the recommendations of the State Water Plan (SWP)

Background

This topical sub-workgroup is proposed as the result of discussions from the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup (IWG), and from conversations on SWP priorities of the Water Planning Council (WPC). The overarching goal of the SWP is to 'provide balanced water for all uses', and ongoing data collection performed by the USGS is necessary if this goal is to be realized. Data collected by the USGS was used in the Current Conditions Assessment (Sec. 2) during the development of the SWP and is used regularly to assess environmental conditions in Connecticut and for public water supply safe yield analyses and other forecasting efforts.

The SWP recommends supporting "the USGS real-time and discrete monitoring programs, including stream gauging, water quality, and groundwater levels," and further recommends that these data should be tracked and coordinated at a state level. The SWP acknowledges that data gaps do exist, and that supporting water data collection programs such as those provided by the USGS will "improve data accessibility and management of the state's water resources" (Sec. 5.2.3.12 Data Availability, Accessibility, and Accuracy). Important next steps include identifying and evaluating what data collection efforts are currently undertaken by the USGS, and what support is needed to continue and/or expand those efforts for SWP implementation.

Purpose

To evaluate the status of the current USGS surface water and groundwater monitoring program in Connecticut; identify recommendations of the SWP that could be resolved by expanding data collection, identify any data gaps that exist within the network that may otherwise help implement the recommendations of the SWP; and identify any funding needs in support of current or expanded data collection efforts.

Scope

This topical sub-workgroup will evaluate how the USGS monitoring network supports SWP recommendations, what data gaps exist including those identified in Sec. 2.1.2.2, and how those data gaps can be resolved. Furthermore, this workgroup can discuss the feasibility of developing an environmental monitoring plan for SWP implementation to consolidate efforts across data collection agencies such as USGS, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and other stakeholders. The workgroup will also investigate how other state's utilize USGS data for water planning purposes. The time needed for this workgroup is estimated to be nine to twelve months after proposal approval. There will be monthly meetings as needed, determined by the workgroup [after their initial meeting](#).

Although the topical sub-workgroup will identify current funding sources and attempt to quantify funding deficiencies, it will not look to identify funding opportunities or seek additional funding to address any data gaps identified.

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Workgroup membership

Christopher Bellucci (DEEP) will chair the workgroup [and DEEP will provide administrative support, including the posting of agendas and minutes to the Public Meeting Calendar](#). The workgroup is open to all who have an interest in the subject matter and wish to contribute to the subject matter. [A call for membership will be sent by e-mail to the WPC e-mail list upon workgroup approval](#). Membership should include, but not be limited to:

- A representative from the USGS
- A representative from an environmental consulting firm
- A representative from the water industry
- A representative from an environmental group

Existing Resources

Sections of the State Water Plan – Current Conditions Assessment

Network Analysis of USGS Streamflow Gages – metadata from 2020 [Network Analysis of USGS Streamflow Gages](#) | [USGS Science Data Catalog](#)

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