

STORET/WQX: USGS/EPA Agreement Memorandum

Agreement between the USGS Water Resources Division and the EPA Assessment and Watershed Protection Division on the Solution of the STORET/NWIS Compatibility Issued May 17, 2000



USGS/EPA Agreement on the Management of Water Quality Data

USGS and EPA will deliver data from USGS/NWIS and EPA/STORET in a common format to Federal, State, and Tribal organizations, as well as to the general public and scientific community to:

1. Analyze and report on the state of the nation's water environment
2. Provide a common basis for integrated water-quality analysis and protection
3. Provide an information base for scientific inquiry about water quality

An underlying goal is to ensure that the data from these important government databases are documented to describe their quality so that users can establish the utility and comparability of the data. The Water-Quality Data Elements (WQDE) developed and approved by Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) provides the framework for such documentation. USGS and EPA jointly accept the goal that their data systems will include meta-data associated with each water-quality result, based on the WQDE, as soon as practicable. The agencies also recognize that much data exists for which available documentation is limited, and yet these data are useful for certain purposes. Therefore, the agencies will not exclude such data from their systems because of these limitations. Rather, the agencies will facilitate and encourage the maximum use of metadata, to enhance the usefulness of the information for multiple purposes.

As the primary goal in the delivery of these data, the USGS and EPA, working with the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC), will develop a geospatial internet-based query tool. This tool should be designed to facilitate the greatest possible sharing of data from all sources to all users. It will be designed to help all users identify data that are relevant to their needs and direct the users to the specific data holdings in order for them to retrieve The data from the most appropriate source, along with consistently defined metadata. The goal is that this system would search many sources of information in addition to USGS and EPA sources.

A joint team of our technical staff will be convened to outline options and identify the tasks required to effectively provide our data to the user community. We will create and maintain a collaborative environment between USGS and EPA to facilitate the development, implementation, and refinement of effective tools to share data with the entire user community. We will do so in a manner that assures that each agency can engage in and understand the system design decisions of the other. The intent is to improve the coordination between the two database systems as they are each modified to meet their respective users' needs to facilitate the development and implementation of effective tools to share our data with the broadest possible user community. As external user groups are assembled for the NWIS and STORET systems, each agency will insure that the other is represented on these user groups.

We will strive to achieve these objectives as soon as is practicable within the constraints of available resources. The technical team will report quarterly to USGS and EPA managers and also report to the NWQMC whenever requested.

This agreement supercedes the May 17, 2000 agreement between USGS and EPA on the issue of NWIS and STORET compatibility.

This plan is agreed on and signed by:

/SIGNED/

Robert M. Hirsch, Associate Director for Water, U.S. Geological Survey

February 25, 2003

And

/SIGNED/

Diane Regas, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

January 13, 2003

Last updated on Friday, April 20, 2012

Last updated on 4/30/2012