

OWRC – Water Quality Monitoring Steering Committee

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Establishment: The Water Quality Monitoring Steering Committee is established under the Ohio Water Resource Council (OWRC).

Sponsor: The OWRC State Agency Coordinating Group (SACG)

Initial Purpose of WQMSC: To develop an evolving action plan to enhance the effectiveness and use of surface and ground water quality data collection within Ohio, Lake Erie and the Ohio River which will minimize duplication of efforts and ensure the good use of public expenditures, while meeting the needs of the agencies involved and the public. The initial steps of the action plan are spelled out in the scope of activities below, and longer term actions are listed that will be scoped out and addressed once progress is made on the initial actions.

Ultimate Purpose of the WQMSC: To be a small, action oriented group responsible for following through on the action plan above, and tracking and reporting progress in implementing the plan.

Organization: The WQMSC will serve under the direction of the OWRC SACG and will consist of representatives from ODNR, OEPA, ODA, ODH, ODOT and USGS.

Group Leader: Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water

Scope of Activities:

Priority 1: Complete identification of who is currently collecting what type of water quality and quantity data and where to access it (“overview”) and make that information available in a simple, user friendly format.

- a. Format for gathering overview information is recommended to be the survey form used in collecting information from members of the Water Monitoring Workgroup. The WQ MCS will review the survey form and determine if more or less information should be included to provide a simple but useful overview of each program, and begin using the new form in early 2013 to gather updated information. The same form should be used by the Water Monitoring Workgroup annually.
- b. Overview information to be gathered/compiled in the following order: “major” collectors of inland lake/stream/groundwater data, “major” collectors of Ohio River basin data, “major” collectors of Lake Erie data (near shore first, then expanding), “minor” collectors of data in same order as “major” collectors. Major = statewide or regional collectors.

- c. Recommend location/agency to host compiled overviews – keeping it as a simple spreadsheet or similar format to avoid high cost of housing and maintenance. Recommend method to ensure routine updates. Post initial list of “major” collectors by March 2013.

Priority 2: Gather and summarize current information on efforts to share and synthesize actual water quality/quantity parameter data being collected.

- a. National efforts (NWQMC, USGS and USEPA primarily)
- b. State and other government efforts (status of moving state data to Water Quality Exchange (WQX), credible data requirements)
- c. University or other entities (CUAHSI, ?)

Priority 3: Make recommendation for enhancing/improving the data sharing and synthesizing in Ohio. This will be done in steps, starting with state agency collected data first, then working through data collected by other major collectors, compliance data (i.e. data submitted to state agencies), and data from minor collectors.

- a. Determine most realistic and cost effective approach (i.e. most likely to be sustained long term) taking into account credible data law, agency resources, etc.
Early indications are that use of the OEPA credible data database, and uploading the data from there to the Water Quality Exchange, thereby making it available through the Water Quality Portal, will be the most realistic approach for state agency collected data. If that is agreed upon, funding by the OWRC would be evaluated to provide a way for state agency data to be uploaded to the Credible Data database.
- b. Gather information on and evaluate funding sources for data collection to determine if conditions could be imposed that would assist in sharing/synthesizing.

Priority 4: Identify gaps in data being collected, either by type or by geographic location or other criteria, and develop methods for filling the gaps. To be discussed and further refined by April 2013.