

Minutes from the Indiana Water Monitoring Council General Membership business meeting (5/26/2010)

Jody Arthur calls the meeting to order at 9:45 am and gives an overview of the meeting agenda

Report of progress

Shawn Naylor (Indiana Geological Survey) gave an overview of the InWMC Web site (www.inwmc.org) that was developed by the Communications Committee following the May 2009 General Membership meeting. He described information provided on the Web site including where to view Board meeting minutes, the member rolodex, committee pages, as well as the events page where general members can submit water resource related events to be posted for others to view.

Scott Morlock (USGS) discussed the recent adoption of an InWMC logo that was selected by the General Membership following a vote. The logo, submitted by Bill Jones (Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs), will be slightly altered before it is ready for distribution on the Council Web site and outreach materials.

InWMC President, Jody Arthur (IDEM), gave a summary of Board activities since the May 2009 General Membership meeting. Included was a discussion of decisions made regarding the Council's organizational structure based on recommendations made by the Organizational Structure Committee. Jody announced that the Board had voted to incorporate so that the Council can eventually maintain a treasury supported by membership dues as well as external funding sources. Also, the Board voted to file for 501(c)(3) or nonprofit status, which will allow the Council to apply for state and federal grants in addition to making donations tax-exempt.

Arthur then summarized her recent experiences at the National Water Monitoring Council (NWQMC) meeting in April where she presented the progress that the InWMC has made during a session titled "Building and Sustaining State and Tribal Water Monitoring Councils". Several resources are available from the NWQMC Web site (<http://acwi.gov/monitoring/index.html>) including webinars on various topics of interest to water resources professionals and a National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI). In addition to presenting information on the InWMC and learning about the services offered through the NWQMC Web site, Jody learned several ideas for new ways that the InWMC might serve its members and these suggestions will be explored by the Board in the coming months.

Projects in the works

The InWMC is in the process of coordinating a water monitoring field day that will likely occur sometime in late July or early August. An agenda for the field day is still under development, but proposed activities include providing an opportunity to learn about different field methods and how contaminant load estimates may be affected by different techniques used to measure discharge and water quality parameters. Currently, the proposed monitoring field day will not require a fee, but due to logistical issues associated with stream-side monitoring sites, there may be a limited number of positions available for registration. More information on the field day is forthcoming.

Establishing a theme for the 2010 fall InWMC conference

In an effort to establish the Council as a stand-alone group of water resource professionals, the Board recently decided to hold a meeting in the fall in order to provide a forum for its members to come together and share information regarding some aspect of water monitoring in Indiana. Although it has been suggested that this gathering could be held as a symposium, the Board remains open to other formats. Jody Arthur presented the following list of potential symposium topics in order to spur discussion:

- Nutrient criteria
- Toxic Algae
- Flooding
- Indiana drainage code as it relates to WQ
- Community-based solutions to WQ problems
- Finding funding sources for monitoring
- Building QA/QC into your studies
- Documenting data quality
- Comparing data from multiple sources
- Data interpretation
- Water monitoring collaborations

Jim Sullivan (IDEM) suggested that a potential topic could be “data relevance” with discussions or presentations focused on what data are most important with regard to the needs of the State. It was also mentioned that a related topic could be “study design” with dialogue focusing on who the audience is for data collection efforts and what levels of QA/QC are appropriate.

Jeff Martin (USGS) suggested that the topic for the symposium should focus on one of the primary functions outlined in the Council’s mission statement (communication, information, and collaboration) which would then omit some of the topics (listed above) such as nutrient criteria. It was also mentioned that a topical symposium should focus on the monitoring aspect of that particular water resource issue so that monitoring elements could then be translated to other water resource issues and therefore be applicable to a broader audience.

Another topic that was mentioned focuses on existing “water monitoring collaborations” currently taking place in Indiana. It was suggested that this symposium might require that presentations be

given by 2 or more collaborators (agencies, consultants, watershed management organizations, universities, etc.) who are collectively addressing a particular water resource issue.

Revisiting the Coordination and Collaboration Committee work plan

As an introduction to this discussion, Scott Morlock (the new committee chairperson) read the purpose of this committee as established during the work planning discussion from the General Membership meeting last May: “The Coordination and Collaboration Committee will take the first step toward the goal of coordination and collaboration among the agencies by planning and facilitating the meeting of state and federal agencies, universities, and other organizations conducting monitoring in Indiana in order to: 1) identify duplicated efforts; 2) identify potential opportunities for collaboration, and; 3) enhance communication among different monitoring organizations by providing an ongoing annual forum for discussion”. Scott mentioned that the planned water monitoring field day is a first step in this direction, but then asked what other suggestions general members have for meeting these goals.

It was recommended that, if the committee organizes meetings, then these should be focused on particular water resource issues within the State and that upper level managers from various organizations should participate in these meetings. These water resource issues could arise on the watershed scale or be statewide, but there should be a definitive topic or topics that will be addressed before calling such a meeting to order. It was also discussed that issues can be funneled to the Board from the General Membership with the Board then calling upon the Committee to organize a meeting.

Finally, Scott noted that the current committee members include: Stu Shipman (IDNR), Jerry Unterreiner (IDNR), Becky Travis (IDEM), Greg Overtoom (IDEM), and Jody Arthur. He also mentioned that if any other general members wish to participate then they are welcome to join the committee.

Final comments by the President

Jody announced that, with Scott taking over as the Coordination and Collaboration Committee Chair, the Communications Committee Chairperson position is now vacant so anyone who is interested in filling that position should contact her.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50am