

STORET Conference Call – December 14, 2006, 12:00-1:00 PM Eastern Time

Introduction (Kristen Gunthardt)

- The minutes from all previous conference calls are available over the web: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/confcalls.html>
- The next scheduled call will be January 2007. The exact date will be emailed via the listserver later this month.
- Please email storet@epa.gov and let EPA know you have attended the call so that meeting rosters may be kept.
- If you have a special topic you'd like to lead for an upcoming call, please email Gunthardt.Kristen@epamail.epa.gov
- EPA would like to hear comments you have on the quality of these conference calls. Please send them to storet@epa.gov
- Please subscribe to the STORET automated listserver for announcements regarding conference calls: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/listserv.html>

Characteristics Discussion (Dwane Young)

- Several months ago, the STORET team made the decision to move to the SRS characteristic methodology. As we move towards an exchange network approach on a number of different EPA programs, we recognize that all systems report on substances analyzed in the environment. The STORET team is taking this opportunity to conform WQX to the EPA standardized naming conventions for substances (SRS) just as other programs within the Agency are conforming to SRS.
- We have been working with SRS to identify and update the naming methodology for different substances. The main issue on today's call is that of measuring the Nitrogen and Phosphorous series. For example, nitrates, nitrites and phosphates can be measured in different forms. SRS has made the decision to name Nitrate as one characteristic, whereas in the past, STORET has tracked Nitrate reported as N and Nitrate reported as NO3.
- Please visit http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx_products/srs_characteristics_decisions.xls to see which characteristics will remain the same, change, or be absorbed into other characteristics.
- After seeing the responses over the STORET Listserv regarding these issues, it was clear that more discussion was needed regarding these characteristics. Thus we are currently evaluating ways to track the different methods of measurement or, as identified on the call, the "speciation" of these substances.
- It also became clear from responses over the STORET listserv that characteristic names and units in the current warehouse will not go through a conversion process via the STORET team. It will complicate the querying process, but we are concerned about altering current data.

Open discussion: Possible Areas to store Characteristic Speciation Information

- Add a record qualifier column to report results such as Nitrate as N
 - o It is possible that if users download the data out of the warehouse without this column they run the risk of combining different species unintentionally.
- Create result units which distinguish species (i.e., mg/L as N)
 - o Alkalinity is currently reported with a result unit of mg/L as CaCO3 in STORET
 - o It may not be ideal to change lab result units should they not match WQX units (i.e., if the lab results are typically provided in micrograms and WQX reports milligrams).
- Use more specific methods to distinguish the species

- Infrequent users run the risk of combining different species unintentionally.
- Add a new column specifically for recording the speciation.
 - STORET will review this option to aid in downloading and analyzing data. This may not be possible since the schema has been approved; we may be constrained to a certain degree.
- Storing systematic data in a comment field is not advisable as a data management practice.
- Dwane Young took the action of sending out a summary of the options discussed over the STORET listserv for users to look at and provide additional feedback.
- EPA would like to make a decision regarding these issues by early January.

Updates to the STORET Warehouse

- We are in the process of creating a watershed report which will query all of the data collectors, stations, and types of data available in a watershed. Watershed information will be based on the HUC 8 level, which will be auto generated if the state and tribe has not populated the field. No information will be overwritten however.
- The watershed report will be a web service to expand the usability of the system and allow users to easily retrieve information out of the system.
- We plan to deploy the watershed report next month.
- Future anticipated report services include a station service and results service.

Water Quality Exchange (WQX)

- The final WQX Schema is now available on the exchange network at www.exchangenetwork.net and on the STORET website at http://www.epa.gov/storet/future_downloads.html. The schema incorporates the latest system and business rules updates.
- We have successfully been able to query, solicit, and load data using WQX. The loading rate is about 49 results/sec, approximately 4x faster than SIM with the largest file we could create – 350,000 records.
- All code has been delivered to RTP to deploy in the staging system. Internal testing is in progress for the next few weeks, and then external, state partners will begin testing in early January.
- The WQX release date for physical/chemical data submissions is scheduled for mid February, 2007.

WQX Organization IDs

- We apologize that contrary to what was said at the WQX outreach meetings, it will not be possible for WQX users to submit new data through WQX using existing STORET Organization IDs. We will have to assign new WQX Organization IDs to avoid duplicates and overwrites. We are testing this update and putting together a document to describe the issue for the website.

2007 STORET WQX Users Conference

- The 2007 STORET/WQX Users Conference will be held in November 2007. The location has not been determined yet, but we will keep you up to date as plans begin to solidify.

Q and A

- Q:** Were characteristics specified in the 1.0 version of STORET or did it gradually evolve as people entered data? (ID)
- A:** STORET has always had different p codes in an attempt to remove unit information from the substance.
- Q:** Where do we get the SRS decision spreadsheet? (MD)
- A:** Please visit the STORET/WQX downloads web page at http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx_products/srs_characteristics_decisions.xls.
- Q:** Are the majority of lab Nitrate results reported "Nitrate as N"? (USGS)
- A:** FL has nitrate as NO₃.
- Q:** Is "Nitrate as N" inherently a different substance as Nitrate as NO₃? How do your labs report this information back? (USGS)
- A:** "Nitrate as N" and "Nitrate" have totally different effects with respect to analyzing environmental issues. In STORET there is no real way to unify the characteristic.
- Q:** Will there be a GIS interface to the WQX warehouse? (USGS)
- A:** It is meant to interact with what will become Enviromapper. Catalog services will allow Enviromapper to call WQX data. We also anticipate that the user will be able to obtain period or record, type of record, and who owns the record.

Participants on call (based on who emailed storet@epa.gov)

Roger E. Stewart	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Arne Sjodin	Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment
Eric Wilson	EPA Region 9 STORET/WQX Coordinator
Deb Soule	New Hampshire DES
Mellony Hoskinson	RTI International
Ed Kim	EPA Region 1
Jim Porter	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Linda Cartwright	TN DEC
Dean Tucker	National Park Service Water Resources Division
Thomas R. Dallaire	MassDEP, DWM
MaryAnn Silagy	Ohio EPA - Div. of Surface Water
Paul Mooney	Acclaim Systems, Inc.
Larry Merrill	EPA Region 3
Laura Madsen	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
James Hileman	EPA Region 10
Jeffrey S. White	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Bruce Tuttle	Idaho Dept of Water Resources
Julie Zimmerman	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Jeff Townsend	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Amanda Dorsett	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Vilma Quant	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Kathy Byrd	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Terry Frohm	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Bill Andrews	State of New York
Kevin Christian	EPA HQ
Dwane Young	EPA HQ
Rome Arquines	EPA HQ
Kristen Gunthardt	EPA HQ
Charles Spooner	EPA HQ