

STORET/WQX Conference Call – May 28, 2009, 12:00-1:00 PM Eastern Time

STORET v2.0 the distributed edition will be de-supported in Fall 2009.

WQX / WQX Web is the replacement to STORET v2.0 distributed edition.

Please visit and read on our 2009 transition to WQX as a data entry and data submission tool.

Explore WQX: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx.html>

Explore WQX Web: http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqxweb_submit.html

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 June 2009. The exact date will be emailed via the listserv 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 listserv for announcements regarding conference calls: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/listserv.html>
- EPA has brought on Charles Kovatch as a new team member. Charles will be working on both STORET and ATTAINS at EPA.

Habitat characteristics discussion

- Currently, certain characteristics within the WQX Characteristics domain list are habitat related characteristics, such as Rapid Bioassessment Protocol parameters (e.g. RBP Bank Stability, or RBP2 Bank Stability).
- EPA wants to discuss with the user community moving the RBP2 parameter values from the Characteristics list into the Activity Metric area of the WQX schema. The reason is that many of the “result values” for these parameters are scores that are associated with a scale to indicate a certain habitat parameter condition. These types of data are more metrics that should be further documented, so EPA would like to move these parameters in to the metrics area of the WQX schema.
- This would mean that any one submitting data for these parameters would no longer report them under characteristics, but rather as habitat type metrics.

Questions:

Q: How would this be different from a regular result value within the schema?

A: Metric area of the schema was meant to allow reporting more “rolled up” figures that are unitless many times, such as reporting out a “5” for bank stability where the scale is 0-20, 0 being very poor stability and 20 being ideal stability. This area also supports biological metrics such as benthic macro invertebrate

Q: Would this support Tiered Aquatic Life use? Would there be a place for this data at the national level?

A: STORET has shied away from capturing this type data, but we are looking towards placing this data within the ADB and the ATTAINS system.

Q: Activity Metric area has both metric value and metric score – what is the difference?

A: Metric values are meant to capture interim figures that roll up to a metric, such as for some of the biological metrics (e.g. % dominant taxa as a percentage, vs the metric that this may roll into). For reporting on habitat scores, only the MetricScoreNumeric would be used, not the MetricValueMeasure. EPA needs to provide better examples of these data elements.

Q: Habitat work going on in Washington – would these go in the results level with a “calculated” indicator?

A: Need to follow up as to what the data is and how it would be fit into the schema.

Follow up on biological names in SRS and WQX taxa list

- On last months’ user call, there was a question as to whether or not the biological names list that SRS provides is similar to WQX’s taxon list.
- EPA clarified that these lists are not in sync, because users have requested standard taxa names that we’ve need to add to WQX, and SRS hasn’t be updated or copied. WQX is working with SRS to get the data more in sync.

Warehouse issue -- detection limits

- Various users have had an issue where they submit detection limits with their data, but these limits are not available via the STORET Warehouse.
- EPA clarified that the logic for transferring data into the STORET Warehouse from the WQX database is causing this issue, as not all detection limits are being transferred into the Warehouse.
- EPA will be fixing this issue and will be following up with timelines as to when this will be fixed.

Q: Beaches data for 2008 still not in the Warehouse – anyone else experiencing this?

A: It may be the synchronization issue where certain refreshes weren’t making it into the Warehouse, but another issue may be that the data isn’t marked as “final” for placement into the Warehouse.

Q: Users would like to see data that is marked as “validated” or “rejected”, etc in the Warehouse, not just data that have been marked as “final”.

A: Bottom line is that there needs to be a mark for data that is ready for the Warehouse. We may be able to leverage the WQX services for better data access. Data that is marked as “preliminary” should definitely not be put into the Warehouse, and EPA will look into changing this logic. States need to be made more aware of this flag.

Distributed STORET de-support reminder

- EPA reminded folks that we are Finding ourselves close to September Deadline.
- STORET 2.0 will be de-supported in September 2009. This means there will be a pre-final update of reference tables in May 2009.
- EPA will no longer receive and public ORACLE Dump files to Data Warehouse.
- DBFix update – Kevin has placed a draft DBFix up on the website as of May 22, 2009. He will do a final reference table update on September 30th for archival on the website.

Options for transitioning:

- Continue using STORET and pull data out for submittal

- Use WQX Web
- Use own database and generate the XML
- Use a system such as AWQMS

Overview of the Ambient Water Quality Monitoring System (AWQMS)

- AWQMS is a data management system created by a partnership of states, tribes and EPA. The need for AWQMS arose out of a need to replace the distributed STORET database with a system for managing data and submitting it to EPA.
- The tool has been developed and is available for use.
- Gold Systems provided the following overview of the AWQMS system:
 - Result of a few years of collaboration and discussion – EPA was a partner, but was more of a collaborative effort for funding and requirements between the following entities UT, IL, MN, NPS, and Region 8 tribes.
 - State or Tribe or others can use as a potential replacement system for STORET
 - Web-based system, modeled after the WQX system (data elements and back end database), though certain data elements were added to assist states such as personnel and chain of custody.
 - Features include an import module (leveraged WQX Web as import module), search pages for data querying, detail pages for data entry, export features for exporting data to flat files or to WQX XML, internal auditing for tracking data transactions which allows incremental updates for EPA submission, graphing and reporting capabilities, integrated node client
 - Demos of the application via webinar will be available if folks are interested. Contact storet@epa.gov, DaveW@goldsystems.com or RyanJ@goldsystems.com if you are interested in seeing a webinar.

Q: Is there a website for more information?

A: Not currently, however we are looking to putting together a website for the community so folks can share information (wiki, blogs, training materials, etc). The webinars are the best place to start.

Q: Is this a hosted application?

A: This is not an EPA hosted application. Users would need to have some party host the application. Gold systems could do this (licensing for web servers, etc would be taken care of), or users can take the product and host it themselves. Both options are out there, and costs must be considered.

Q: What technology is it developed in?

A: ASP .NET application so runs on Microsoft server. It does support Oracle or SQL Server for back end database.

Q: Has any of the SWIMS data been put in through this protocol?

A: None of the SWIMS data has been put through WQX. WSA data was put in using older tools, but we are moving towards placing the data through using the WQX data standard.

Q: How much handholding is required from Gold Systems for using AWQMS?

A: This depends on the local technical staff, but there is a recommendation that there is some involvement with Gold in setting up the tool, or migrating data from

the STORET database. These are all costs that must be considered by states or tribes if they want to use AWQMS. Because EPA is not maintaining this tool, states or other will need to consider their own maintenance costs.

General Q and A

Q: So to clarify, with the habitat characteristics, will they be moved to the metrics area?

A: That was the idea, and is where the discussion needs to be. It should be noted that the metrics provide for additional documentation so folks can report scale, etc. The other item to note is that metrics are handled much like the analytical methods, where the shared domains can be used by multiple folks.

Q: What is the source of the biological names within WQX?

A: The names come from the ITIS system as the original source.

Q: What are expected with the Metric Name – should it be the characteristic name?

A: If using the “national” metrics, you wouldn’t have to supply the name, but for organization specific metrics, you would supply the name.

Q: When will EPA make the change for the habitat characteristics?

A: EPA will follow up with a listserv message for consensus and then a timeframe for updates.

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

Susan Moore	Env. Services Project Consultant, CH2M Hill
Galen Holder	Wichita & Affiliated Tribes Environment Programs
Toney Ott	Region 8, USEPA
Karla Hyde	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
James F. Hudson	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Christian	Head Quarter, USEPA
Kristen Gunthardt	Head Quarter, USEPA
Charles Kovatch	Head Quarter, USEPA