

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Water and Land Resources

Part 705: Water Data and Information

Chapter 1: Coordination of Federal Activities in Water Data and Information

Originating Office: U. S. Geological Survey

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1.1 General. This Chapter describes the Department's role and responsibilities to coordinate Federal programs and activities about water data and water information collection and use.

1.2 Authority. Guidelines for coordination of Federal programs and activities in the collection and use of water resources data and information are prescribed in Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-92-01 dated December 10, 1991.

1.3 Functions. As prescribed in M-92-01, the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in collaboration with other Federal agencies, is designated as the lead agency for coordinating water resources information programs and activities to ensure effective decision making for natural resources management and environmental protection at all levels of government and in the private sector. Additionally, the Memorandum provides that the Department of the Interior, through the USGS, shall:

A. Provide procedures at the national, interstate, and State levels to conduct interagency business related to the Water Information Coordination Program, to exchange information, and to foster collaboration.

B. Plan, design, and operate a cost effective national network for water-data collection and analysis that meets the priority water-information needs of the Federal government and, to the extent possible within available resources, the needs of the non-Federal community that are tied to national interests. The USGS shall have principal responsibility for operating the national network.

C. Coordinate funding, staffing, and the provision of other resources needed to support interagency water-information activities for ensuring the best use of available resources. To the extent possible, each agency is responsible for providing resources to support water-information activities critical to their missions and for collaborating with the USGS and other agencies to avoid duplication of efforts.

D. Collaborate, as appropriate, with other groups that are coordinating related categories of information, such as spatial data and meteorological information. Regarding spatial data, the Committee should plan and implement actions to establish water resources components of a

national spatial-data infrastructure.

E. Develop uniform standards, guidelines, and procedures for the collection, analysis, management, and dissemination of water data and information in order to improve quality, consistency, and accessibility nationwide.

F. Support water information networks that index and disseminate information so as to improve the awareness of, availability of, and access to existing water information holdings of Federal agencies and the non-Federal sector. Through these information systems, the USGS and other agencies shall maintain the national historical water-information files needed to meet current and future requirements.

G. Publish and distribute documents that inform others about the conclusions, recommendations, and activities resulting from the Water Information Coordination Program.

1.4 Implementation Responsibility. Responsibility for implementing the functions described in M-92-01 is assigned to the USGS, through the Assistant Secretary - Water and Science.

A. The Water Information Coordination Program in the Water Resources Discipline of the USGS provides overall leadership for implementation of M-92-01. The Program performs national-level coordination, review, network and planning functions assigned to the Department by the Memorandum.

B. The Water Resources Discipline of the USGS will continue to operate and/or contribute to those networks, databases and projects appropriate to its mission, adjusted to the needs of user agencies, as prescribed in M-92-01. USGS Regional and District offices are responsible for conducting coordination functions within their respective geographic areas of responsibility. These field-level functions are performed with general guidance from the USGS Associate Director for Water, through the Water Information Coordination Program.

1.5 Advisory Committee. The Secretary has an Advisory Committee on Water Information to provide advice on the performance of the assigned functions and promote coordination and cooperation in the Program. Description of the Committee follows:

A. Composition. The Committee is composed of representatives of various governmental and non-governmental organizations, associations and technical societies, the academic community, and the private sector, who are active in the optimum development and conservation of the Nation's water resources.

B. Committee Chair. The Committee's chair is the Deputy Assistant Secretary - Water and Science, Department of the Interior. The Alternate Chair is the Associate Director for Water, USGS.

C. Functions. The Committee, on the advice of sub-groups, provides advice on appropriate policies and procedures to foster improved coordination among Federal, State and

tribal agencies. The Committee also provides advice on appropriate policies and procedures for obtaining statements, requests and observations concerning data and information needs from the non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to foster enhanced collaboration for improved operation, access and use of national water data and information networks.

D. Committee Meetings. The Committee meets at least once each year at a time and place selected by the Water Information Coordination Program.

E. Staff. The Chief, Water Information Coordination Program, is the Designated Federal Official and the Executive Secretary of the Committee and provides such staff support services as the Chair may require.

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