

Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council

Recommendations:

Oversight structure for implementing the Monitoring-Coordination Action Plan

November 20, 2008

SUMMARY - The Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council (FWRMC) recommends a three-tier oversight system for overseeing monitoring coordination. This consists of:

- a) **(Tier 1) a statewide council** responsible for overall guidance and strategies
- b) **(Tier 2) five regional organizations** composed of the monitoring entities working within the geographic boundaries of each of the five water management districts, and
- c) **(Tier 3) sub-regional groups** as needed to achieve regional monitoring goals.

TIER DETAILS –

Tier 1- Florida State Monitoring Council

It is recommended that this council be based on the existing Monitoring Council, operate similarly to the existing council, and remain chaired and staffed by FDEP. Membership would be expanded to increase regional representation and include ocean observing. This 'new' council would consist of the following seats:

One representative from each the nine main Florida agencies conducting monitoring:

Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
Dept. of Health (FDOH)
Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWWMD)
Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD)
Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)
South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

One representative from each of five Regional Monitoring Organizations, whose boundaries match those of the five water management districts:

NFWWMD Regional Monitoring Organization
SRWMD Regional Monitoring Organization
SWFWMD Regional Monitoring Organization
SFWMD Regional Monitoring Organization
SJRWMD Regional Monitoring Organization

One representative from the ocean observing community:

Florida Coastal Ocean Observing System (FL-COOS) Consortium

The above Council would build on the structure of the existing FWRMC. The present single FLERA representative would be replaced by 5 regional representatives. Additionally, a representative of the ocean observing community around Florida would be added for a total of 15 members. This Council would provide guidance and establish structure and core goals for the Regional Monitoring Organizations.

Tier 2 – Regional monitoring-coordination organizations (regions are based on WMD boundaries)

FLERA and WMDs will identify an interim person from each region to represent the region on the Tier 1 council. Initial responsibilities of the interim person will be to lead creation of the regional organization. Once established, the regional organizations would select their representative to the State Monitoring Council.

Regional organizations would be composed of representatives from monitoring entities operating in the region. These might include federal, state, county, and local governmental monitoring programs as well as representatives from universities, not-for-profit organizations, private interests, etc.

The State Monitoring Council would provide guidance on Regional structure and activities. The overarching charge for the Regional Organizations would be to assist coordination between monitoring entities.

Tasks that might be appropriate include:

1. Identify monitoring programs existing within Region
 - a. Is program information (metadata) available for inclusion in the Monitoring-Coordination Action Plan's monitoring catalog (e.g., available in Water Atlas) (If yes - add to catalog. If no – encourage creating one or adopting existing effort).
2. Present QA oversight/training (e.g., Round Robins, etc.)
3. Present monitoring-design training and oversight (e.g., training in establishing Data Quality Objectives-DQOs)
4. Present metadata. Discuss monitoring variables.
5. STORET/data management training.
6. Provide forum for research/new initiatives. Boost awareness of endpoints/receiving water resources. Help identify variables that contribute to water resource “problems” and help with standard development or other initiatives to protect/preserve resources.
7. Enhance awareness of linkage of freshwater/coastal/marine resources.

Tier 3 – Sub-regional and topic-specific groups

The Tier 3 level is included because of expectations that some activities within some regions may need to be carried out at a smaller scale. While FWRMC does not intend to recommend specific Tier 3 efforts, these might include things like Quality Assurance round robins or locale-specific training activities.

It is intended that where practical sub-regional groups organize their areas to fit within WMD boundaries where practical; i.e., should not report to multiple Regional organizations.