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February xx, 2003

Office of Information Recommendation to Districts Regarding Web Service

To: District Chiefs
Cc: Webmasters, System Administrators
From: Katherine Lins, Acting Chief, Office of Information

WATER RESOURCES DISCIPLINE MEMORANDUM NO. 03.xx
SUBJECT: Office of Information Recommendation to Districts Regarding Web Service

The Office of Information is advising districts to migrate their web content to NatWeb as soon as possible. This is consistent with Bureau and Department of Interior (DOI) guidance to reduce the number of publicly available web servers, and with a recent recommendation from the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC).

NatWeb is a network of mirrored servers at three geographically dispersed locations. Hence, service to the public via NatWeb shouldn't be impacted by events such as a hurricane, tornado, or earthquake occurring at either a local office or a NatWeb location. The operation of these servers is funded, in part, by the GIO's Office. NatWeb now serves data for more than 30 offices or programs. Several more web sites are in the process of being transferred to NatWeb. For more information, please see – <http://natweb.usgs.gov/>

It is likely that DOI will block public access to port 80 to most web sites (required for web service) at the Internet portal level sometime this early this summer. This will be done in order to strengthen Internet security. Hence, moving web sites to NatWeb is a proactive step to ensure that service of data and other products via the Internet by your office is not interrupted.

Please note that those districts that have installed NWISWeb locally should continue to serve data via their local NWISWeb installations, at least until NWISWeb has been implemented on the NatWeb servers. The target completion date for this is early summer.

This recommendation does not apply to districts that are currently using Microsoft's Internet Information Server (IIS), ArcIMS, or Oracle software for public web services. The NatWeb Core Team is exploring the possibility of supporting these applications in the near future. Additional guidance on these technologies will be forthcoming.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Lorna Schmid at (703) 648-6834.

Thank you.