ITAC Conference Call
February 19, 2014

Attendance:

Michael Lewis
Scott Gain
Terri Moore
Nate Booth
Bob Avery
Kate Flynn
Dane Ohe
Gary Krammes
David McCulloch
Pete Cinotto
Kris Lund
Gary Cottrell
Kim Martz

Agenda:

- Charter discussion
- Action Item updates (if time permits)

Minutes:

Today's call focused on discussing the ITAC Charter and comments provided to-date.

Michael opened the discussion by asking ITAC to think about the reason for its existence. The committee has been stagnant recently. We need to identify if the committee has run its course or identify ITAC's purpose. Terri responded that ITAC is not as effective as it has been in the past. There is a lot going on in the field in the way of emerging technologies that we can share. Terri feels that it would be good to try and refocus. If it does not work, the group may need to take a hiatus. Terri feels that the inability to hold face-to-face meetings has impacted the effectiveness of ITAC. Michael asked for thoughts.

Scott commented that the organization has changed. The relevance of ITAC is less due to reorganizations that have taken place as well as the "flowering" of similar kinds of committees. Other groups are familiar and use the same technologies as ITAC. Scott added that it's not clear that ITAC has the same role. He does feel that ITAC is relevant to OWI. Nate commented that he agrees with Scott; the landscape is very different now. Nate added that he looked at Michael's proposed Purpose statement, and he agrees with Michael. There are not many WMA IT policies to influence any more. It would be good for Water Science Centers (WSCs) to have a common voice, through ITAC, to help influence current policies. ITAC would take the WSC voice and elevate it to the Bureau level. This does not require meeting face-to-face. Michael commented that it's not easy to coordinate such an effort. Nate responded that this is where ITAC member constituencies come into play. This is the most important aspect of ITAC and would require coordination and time. Kris echoes Scott and Nate's thoughts that ITAC's role has changed. Our role needs to be modified. How do we work under new policies.

Review of Charter

Michael began by referring to his strawman Purpose statement. ITAC's thoughts:

- Terri likes the statement "facilitate technology transfer."
- Nate commented that he is curious how other regions might foster similar conversations. Water is unique to these types of conversations.
- Kate commented that Water was a leader in technology because of the need for data consistency.
- Michael commented that he spelled out Region in his edits to be politically correct and keep the regions in the loop.
- ITAC likes Michael's strawman.
- Gary Krammes raised a question about the first highlighted sentence. Is this correct? Should this be changed to say a "guidance" role? Nate responded that it's okay to leave as is.
- Bob Avery commented that he looks at this as someone new to the organization. He sees and reads this as people are building things whereas, he sees ITAC as more of a facilitating/coordinating body. Nate and Michael agree with Bob's thoughts. Nate reworked the sentence in the charter. Bob added that the genesis of ITAC is OWI and that body provides/takes in information.
- Nate commented that ITAC is a stronger committee if it is independent. Michael added that it's important to facilitate chosen conversations/topics.
- Kate commented that we need to look at the membership of ITAC. Members are chosen to represent grassroots efforts. Scott agrees, but the committee is not motivated that way. Kate added that she was part of a group of people who provided input for the original charter. She added that the group was representing the field; make sure those folks are represented and that they have input. Scott asked if it was always intended that way. Was it truly motivated by grassroots efforts? Or motivated by HQ? It appears to Scott that this is an important way for HQ to know what's going on in Centers. He sees a useful role in helping folks at HQ and that most Center Directors do not spend a lot of time thinking about this.
- Michael commented that he feels that to be successful into the future, the membership needs to be more active with their constituencies – find out what they need – be actively involved.
- Nate commented that he sees two changes – 1) back in the day, water had a lot of systems and needed a group like this. Today, NWIS is the only large group and it has 4-5 of its own groups to influence it, 2) IT is folded in to the overall business practices.
- Michael asked about the idea of ITAC being a clearinghouse. We would not want that. Nate added that he's not sure if that is what ITAC should be doing. He likes it being set up to support Centers.

- Membership was discussed during the last call. Center Directors will be queried for nominations and then elevate to the regional level. Action is to add Center Director as the point for member nominations to ITAC. Membership is geographically diverse.
  - Terri commented that the IT Liaison is not an official member, but ITAC invites them to face-to-face meetings. There are three IT Liaisons.
  - Kris noted that DBAs will be renamed Local Data Managers (Vision and AQUARIUS will use this terminology)
  - Michael noted the Chair position is not restricted to a Center Director. Scott commented. that the Chair should not be someone in OWI if we are trying to achieve independence.
- We need to have a conversation about SharePoint versus the Web. Both need work. The general comments were that it is less confusing for members to have one site.
- Check numbers for meetings – ITAC meets monthly (conference calls) and 1 face-to-face each year.
- Decision process section – Michael commented that the idea of ITAC proposals and Business Analyses is interesting. Kate added that these processes were in place when facilitation was the way to go. Do we need this in charter? Kate suggested that this section be included as a brief summary. Bob Avery commented that folks in the field may be put off by having to follow this process. Kris suggested having a form on SharePoint with ITAC agreeing this is a good idea. Bob suggested that the appropriate constituent representative can frame the issue in a document. Michael noted that this may be a good mechanism to float such issues to the top. Scott commented that the proposal process in the charter does not seem relevant and currently, ITAC has little control over large issues. To determine what ITAC has done historically, one would have to go through the minutes as there is no separate repository. The suggestion is to remove this from the charter but retain the information for historical purposes. The same will apply to the Business Analysis section of the charter.

ACTION -- Michael will revise the charter according to today's discussion and send to ITAC for approval.

Outstanding Issues –

- ITAC needs to seek membership nominations for Bob Kimbrough and Pete Cinotto rotations. Regional Directors and ITAC will be copied in the request to Center Directors. Kris suggested that the new meeting schedule be included in the email. Michael concurred and will also attach the updated charter.

New Business –

- David McCulloch announced that he will be retiring. ITAC will need to also find a GIS representative. David will make recommendations to Michael for potential nominees.
- Think about where we may want to hold this year's face-to-face meeting.

Next Call –

- Monthly Call – March 19, 2014