

Donna J Hector-Sabin

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Minutes

AOs,

For your convenience, I have summarized the meeting minutes from the ITAC (Information Technology Advisory Committee) meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska, June 22-24, 2004. I pulled out the portions I thought would be of most interest to AOs, however, you may access the minutes in their entirety by going to <http://water.usgs.gov/usgs/nwis/itac/minutes/anchorage040622/>.

What is ITAC? ITAC is a 14-member group that helps guide and direct the information technology (IT) policy for the Water Resources Discipline (WRD). The group is made up of a cross-section of managerial, administrative and IT support personnel. We are a direct conduit to relay computer issues from the field to Regional, WRD, and Bureau level managers and vice-versa. More information about our group can be found at <http://water.usgs.gov/usgs/nwis/itac/>

The next ITAC meeting is scheduled for November 16-18, 2004, in Little Rock, Arkansas and the proposed is as agenda follows:

- Update on AD and C&A (Paul Exter)
 - o Impacts on field
 - o Critical information infrastructure
 - o Update from ITSOT (telecom with Lester North)
 - o Wireless status (Skip Dutrow)
 - o Enterprise Services Network (ESN)
- Publishing technology plan for competitive sourcing and re-engineering (Greg Allord)
- Update/follow-up on CHIDER Conference (Burl Goree)
- IDEAS & FBMS updates (Donna Hector-Sabin)
- MY SAP (Kevin Gallagher) - ?
- ADCP and hand-held demonstrations

Please feel free to contact me with any comments, suggestions, and/or additions to the agenda for the next meeting.

Alaska Science Center (ASC) overview by Steve Frenzel (Acting Center Chief at the time of the ITAC meeting)

- ASC, an integrated science center, has a \$27M program. Water program — declining budget; down to 5.6M now, but improving.

- Water technology — ADCP; RTK GPS surveying; bathymetry; glacier mass balance; floodplain mapping. Bridge scour is a significant issue for Dept. of Transportation (DOT). Knik River — active sediment transport (some scour issues). Jeff Conway is Project Chief. Real-time aspect very important. Multi-D modeling; data collection: RTK GPS; ADCP; Echo Sounder collecting shear-stress data too. Can model to help determine where to place bridges. It's a challenge because of dynamic stream channels. Emerging water issues: coalbed methane for rural population — Favorable regulatory environment now.

- AK has fewer gaging stations and is 20 years behind collecting data from other states; it will take a while to "catch up."

- Juneau has around 6 people. Data involves over 2/3 of personnel.

- Flat funding in NSIP program now. Flight insurance has gone up.

DOI — owns 58% of Alaska; FWS 19%; NPS 15% (half its land is in AK!)

DOI partners in AK — NPS; BLM; USFWS; BLM — starting to do water-quality data now; glacier-monitoring program; AVO

- One more year on Yukon River NASQAN (data collectors for program)

- Real-time scour monitoring: 12 sites currently (17 next year)

Scour monitoring — Data transmitted every 4 hours via OrbComm satellite or phone modem. DOT is cooperator.

- Lots of coal in Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley.

- Base flows needed for salmon survival.

- Lake Water Quality: Many lakes in AK. (over 3M!)

- Big Lake = Big Problems: oxygen deficit; potentially high VOCs; most lakes lack baseline data.

- NPRA National Petroleum Reserve (23M acres)

- ANWR Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

- Stream Hydraulics – Bridge scour is very important. Pipeline people interested in this!

- Stream restoration

- Large river fish habitat

- Earth Science Information Center (ESIC) will convert to “interpretive association” (in early planning stages).

- Alaska Pacific University (APU) is ~400 students. USGS is major source of income for APU.

Alaska Science Center IT overview by Carla Simpson

Carla is the team leader under GIO and she will answer to Leslie Holland-Bartels (new ASC Chief in August). They support about 215 FTEs (250 people) and there are 11 staff members on GIO Team — 7.5 FTEs; rest are contractors. The team is "really great" -- They integrate philosophy of mission statement into everyday work within constantly evolving environment. They have been integrated for 3 years now (re: IT stuff).

Carla's philosophy is "Different disciplines should be able to access each other's data; need to get scientists to collaborate and work more as a team. Lack of actual co-location is an issue."

TRAINING needs for IT people:

Terri Moore (Western Region Computer Specialist) was asked to identify what type of training should be planned for IT staff during IT technical reviews. She suggested adding this to the IT Review Checklist since many SAs and supervisors need assistance in identifying training for the IT staff's IDP's.

Can training be prioritized? Possible to list 5-7 recommended courses. RCSers will prioritize list of courses needed and request recommendations from ITSOT, SUN TAC, BWTST. (Terri Moore, WR; Scott, CR; Tim McElhone, ER)

Windows Office 2003 — Streaming video will be made by August 2004 on how to create Word template for creating reports before being put into In Design. Ninety percent of people are not using In Design. Sandy Williamson suggested making an hour course via a DVD and online for streaming. E-mail regarding available training should go out to everyone individually and not just via the Bulletin Board.

Bureau AD Deployment Status by Paul Exter

There are about 250 domains in USGS right now. All Bureaus must move to AD by Dec. 2004. The project phases are Discovery (Dec. 2003-Feb. 2004), Risk Assessment (completed in February 2004), Construction --"Proof of concept" testing, Pilot locations (yet to be determined; first one will be Reston).

The plan is to migrate locally to AD with BWTST guidance (NT 4.0 retirement) recommended try to get everything onto one computer. The plan for training is to get SAs trained no latter than CY 2005. However, DOI may put pressure on us to "rush it". In addition, there will also be training offered at the 2005 ITEM conference.

DOI Website moratorium by Karen Klima

There will be a **one-year limit** freeze on Web-related software and hardware. Web hardware and software have not been identified; however, will be by end of this fiscal year. Karen Siderelis has ultimate responsibility — not DOI.

Discussion:

The number of Web sites is being restricted - not necessarily the content of the Web pages. The Dept. has over 55,000 Web sites (some redundant and some out-of-date) and only 70,000 employees. They wanted to push a lot of clean up and better monitor new Web sites. Bureau will stress having all Web sites registered. Enterprise Web Team

was given a challenge to come up with a plan in next 180 days. Detailee from EPA working with them; will be working with Communications Office and Enterprise Web group (Web Advisory Group).

Wireless waiver process by Tim Quinn

We can control the environment of Gov't computers used at home by installing certain encrypted package on system and building VPN network. (Tim does not see this environment any different from an airport or hotel.) The Wireless Team will be determining what that software will be to do this.

OPINION--This is a sticky one that will involve more discussion:

Non-Gov't computer for Gov't work: Negatives — Viruses; have to meet specific minimum standards; total cost of ownership is cheaper for Gov't to put a Gov't PC in someone's hands instead of dealing with liabilities, etc.; still may require encryption, firewall, etc.

FISMA (Federal Information Security Management Act) update by Kevin Gallagher

Sensitivity-level assignments (about 200 positions are classified as “sensitive” and will require background investigations (some IT Specialists, system owners, and District Chiefs). However, no funding came with this mandate. FISMA corrective action team is trying to figure out how to address the funding of these required investigations. We cannot do all this by 7/31/04 but it is okay if we at least have a process in place. This also applies to all contract employees classified as IT.

Lowest common denominator is the **score**; we (USGS) have an 88.5 as a score. It is always higher than Department score. The Department is trying to figure out which bureau is “dragging them down.” We are not the lowest bureau, but we are down there in the bottom three or four. The large distributed bureaus with large infrastructures have a difficulty obtaining a good score. Scores are based on self-assessments (until 7/31/04). Then IG will come in and “check” and their score will go to Congress. We could end up with a “C.” (Not too bad from an “F”!)

Competitive Sourcing... Re-engineering by Gregory Allord

Officially, the Competitive Sourcing process is continuing and Competitive Sourcing is to be announced in FedBizOps on August 16, 2004. The Performance Management Team plans on working into late CY 2004 with the Most Efficient Organization (MEO) Team working early in CY 2005. A Decision is to be made by May 2005 with an Implementation date of September 30, 2005.

Recent evidence shows that we need to focus on results and not just the Competitive Sourcing process. For Example — Forest Service was given permission to get out of MEO process. The Competitive Sourcing Team made a Re-engineering proposal and presented it to Bob Doyle. Bob had an initial meeting with Scott Cameron, which was encouraging and had another one on July 1.

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