

Minutes of 09 October 2008 QAAG (Conference Call) Meeting

Attendees:

Eric Hebert - EEMS
Gerard van der Jagt - Frontier Geosciences
Maria Jones - EEMS
Mike Kolian - USEPA
Kristi Morris – NPS (guest attendee for Criteria 4 discussion)
Mark Rhodes - NADP PO
Jane Rothert - CAL
John Sherwell - Maryland DNR
Greg Wetherbee - USGS

Items:

Minutes of 11 April 2008 meeting. Greg motioned to accept the minutes from the meeting. Gerard seconded the motion.

Criteria 4. All attendees confirmed access to the data cd provided by Mark. Discussion of the animation files for concentration followed. Kristi suggested that deposition maps would help the discussion. Eric suggested that it might be better to show the threshold maps rather than the difference maps. The threshold maps illustrate the similarities between the isopleth maps, the difference maps highlight their differences. Greg provided a history of the Criteria 4 issue, and suggested that we consider the impact of eliminating Criteria 4, not just relaxing it. Kristi asked whether a change to Criteria 4 would be limited to high elevation sites, or to sites whose annual precipitation is more than 20% snow. Consensus was that any change to Criteria 4 would be used networkwide.

Kristi noted that nearly all eastern sites appear to meet Criteria 4, while high elevation sites in/around the Rockies do not. Greg suggested that the difference may be due to moisture content of snow, leading to a discussion of work done by Mike Kolian using NOAA snow water data for 2005-2008. Mark provided the MS PowerPoint slides for that work to attendees. John noted that there is no similar data for rain, and that sample chemistry from those events is likely to vary more than it appears to do for snow.

Greg asked for arguments for/against a change to Criteria 4. John, Jane, and Eric all stressed the importance of maximizing collection efficiency, and the need for an accurate precipitation value even if Criteria 4 is relaxed/eliminated. Greg noted the snowpack study by Ingersol and Clow, a study by Lynch in 1988/89, and a study conducted in France, all of which suggest that collection efficiency could be relaxed without negatively impacting NADP results. High concentrations may occur at any time during a precipitation event. The consensus was that if Criteria 4 is relaxed/eliminated, it would be important to document collection efficiency in a meaningful way. Several ideas were suggested for presenting collection efficiency data for the network.

Consensus was that it would be best to wait until the Spring Meeting to present a recommendation to the Joint Sub-Committee. This will give QAAG sufficient time to consider changes to Deposition isopleths, changes to mercury isopleths, and the extent of the changes if Criteria 4 is relaxed/eliminated. Based on results so far, all members agreed that a change to Criteria 4 is warranted. All agreed that additional information is needed in order to recommend a specific change. Kristi suggested presenting ~6 bullet items at the Fall Meeting in Madison, WI detailing the work done so far, and stating that a recommendation will be made at the Spring Meeting. All members agreed with this approach.

Proposal – Combined NTN/MDN/AIRMoN precipitation grid for annual isopleths. Mark suggested that QAAG make a proposal to the Joint Sub-Committee at the Fall Meeting that the precipitation and deposition isopleths reflect data from each of the three networks. At present, each network uses only its own precipitation data. Mike stated that this is a “no-brainer”, and that he was not certain why we are not doing it already. All members agreed to proceed with the proposal.

Status Items:

HAL QAP Mark stated that this document has been approved and was posted to the NADP website in July 2008.

HAL 2006 QAR Mark stated that comments have been provided to Frontier Geosciences and that the final document is pending. Gerard stated that the final version of this document will be sent to the Program Office by Friday, 10 October 2008.

HAL 2007 QAR Gerard stated that the draft version of this document will be forwarded to the Program Office by Saturday, 11 October, 2008.

CAL 2005-2006 QAR Mark stated that the draft version of this document was received in July 2008 and was reviewed by Sherwell, Wetherbee, and Rhodes. Jane stated that she has incorporated those changes/comments into the document, and that the document will be forwarded to the ISWS editor in the near future. The final version of the report should be available soon after that.

CAL 2007 QAR Jane stated that this document is in progress.

Network QAP Mark stated that the status of this document has not changed since the conference call in the Spring.

Proposal for data censoring and reporting of values below MRLs and MDLs Mark asked for clarification on this item, whether the item was resolved/finalized during the Spring NADP Meeting. Gerard confirmed that DMAS made a recommendation to the Executive Committee during the Spring Meeting, and that the new protocol would be implemented with the new NADP website. MRLs will not be reported. Values below the MDLs will be available via a special request/query, and will appear as a "less than qualifier" for the standard query.

Proposal – Field chemistry, change to protocol for retaining sample Mark asked whether QAAG wants to propose a protocol change for NTN sites that continue to conduct field chemistry. This matter came up as a result of recent site surveys. The current protocol allows the site operator to pour from the NADP bottle to retain sample for their own field chemistry measurements. The protocol also requires a minimum NADP/NTN sample volume of 50 mL. Jane expressed concern that a sample volume of 50 mL provides no room for error. Spillage will impact the number of analyses that can be performed, and re-analysis is no longer an option.

Maria reported that 9 NTN sites, of the sites that were surveyed during the past year+, perform field chemistry. Those sites are: NC25, ME00, ME98, MI99, NY29, NY68, OR10, OR97, and UT99. Of those sites, Eric and Maria have direct knowledge of the protocols that were used at ME00, ME98, and NY68. The other sites were surveyed by other Survey Team members. The question was asked as to how often those 9 sites return samples with the minimum volume (50 mL) required by the current protocol.

The suggestion was made to recommend a minimum NADP/NTN sample volume of 75mL, and that site operators not pour from the sample bottle.

Guidelines for Laboratory Review document Mark noted that during the CAL Review earlier this year, portions of the Guidelines document were identified as needing revision. The document is in the process of being updated. A draft version of the document will be sent to QAAG members when the updates have been made.

CAL Review 2006 Mark noted that the Program Office received the final comments from the CAL for the 2006 Lab Review. That Review should be finalized shortly.

CAL Review 2008 Greg provided a brief synopsis of the Lab Review conducted in July 2008. Greg noted that the revised format of 3 (4, including accolades) worked well for the Review and was received well by CAL staff. Greg stated that the exit interview between CAL staff and the Review Team Leaders worked well. It helped answer remaining questions, and provided a venue for finalizing the classification of items found during the Review.

Mark noted that one recommendation from Review was that the next CAL Review should include the Review of the Program Office (i.e., the Quality Systems Review). The Review Team noted that there are many areas of overlap between CAL responsibilities and those of the Program Office, in particular, electronic raingages. It was the Review Team's recommendation that the length of the Review be extended by a day or two to accommodate the additional effort.

HAL Review 2009 Gerard provided an update on the planned move of the HAL. A new location has been identified. Frontier Geosciences is in final negotiations for that space. Gerard expects the move to start sometime in the Spring. August/September was discussed as a possible timeframe to conduct the Review of the HAL. It was decided to discuss this item further during the QAAG conference call in the Spring. More information should be available at that time regarding the move.

Status of Site Surveys Eric provided a status of the site surveys. He suggested a meeting with Mark and Mike during the Fall Meeting in Madison, WI to discuss possible changes to survey questions. Eric wants to make certain that we are capturing as much useful/relevant information as possible. Eric expressed concern with bottle catch and the MDN sample train. Gerard suggested a meeting with Eric and Maria while in Madison, WI for the Fall NADP Meeting to discuss this further.

In the interest of time, Mark concluded the meeting and suggested that the remaining agenda items be discussed Monday in Madison. Greg suggested meeting at 6:15 PM in the lobby of the hotel for dinner, and to finish the discussion. Members agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 1500 ET/1400 CT/1300 MT/1200 PT.