



# WATER FACT SHEET

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## NATIONAL WATER-INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE ACTIVITIES: GROUND-WATER PERSPECTIVE

### BACKGROUND

An ever increasing amount of data on the Nation's ground water is being collected by agencies of Federal, State and local governments, and by private organizations. This information helps answer questions about water resources asked by decisionmakers at all levels of government, by educators, regulators, water managers, water scientists, other water professionals, and by the public.

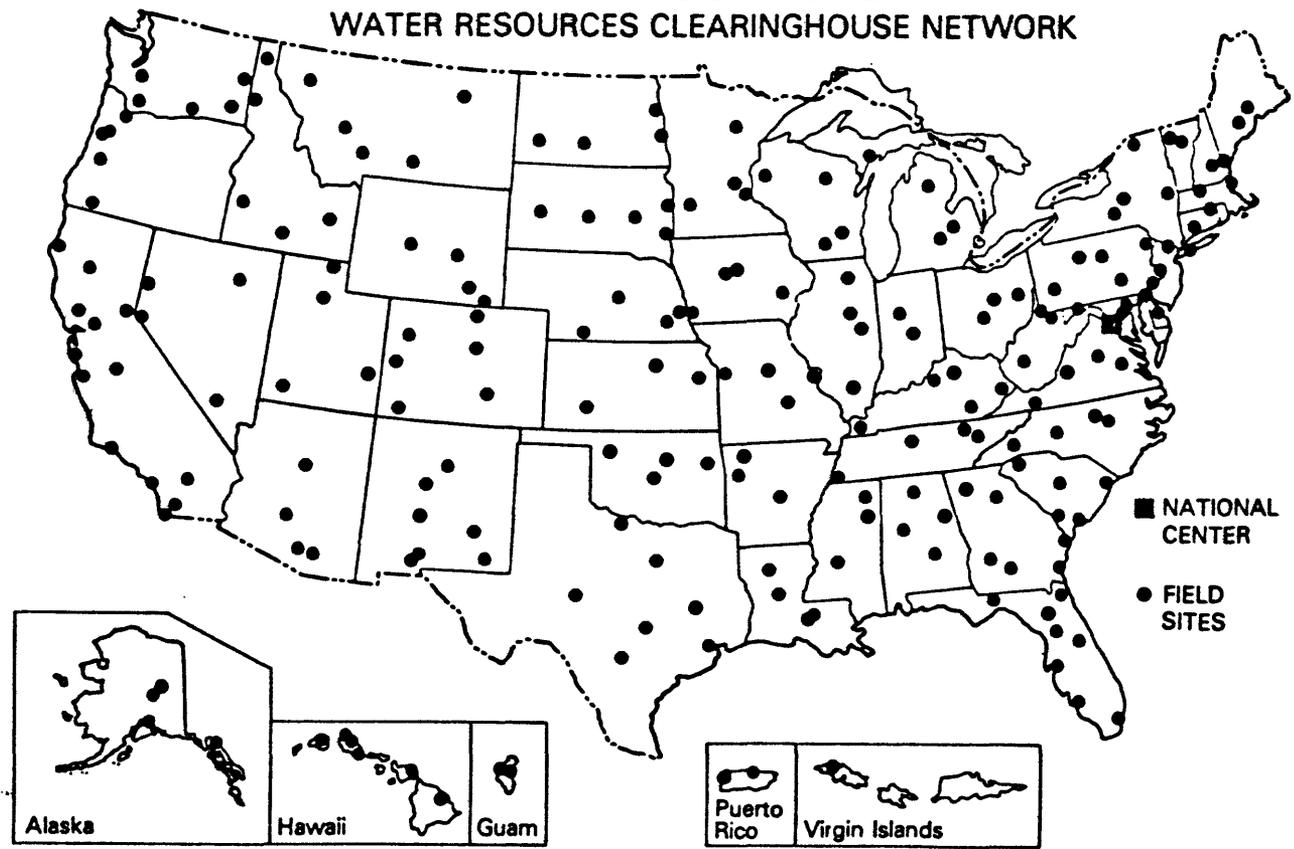
The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has functioned for many years as an informal clearinghouse for water-resources information that enables users to access ground-water information effectively. These clearinghouse activities help efforts to use water resources effectively, to solve or mitigate water-resources problems, to conduct

water-resources research, and to avoid duplication of studies.

### THE CLEARINGHOUSE NETWORK

Water-resources clearinghouse activities of the USGS are conducted through several separate computerized water-information programs that are involved in the collection, storage, retrieval, and distribution of different types of water information. More than 200 offices throughout the Nation are linked by a computerized network that permits the efficient two-way transfer of water-resources data between USGS offices, other Federal and State agencies, and private organizations and individuals across the country.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
WATER RESOURCES CLEARINGHOUSE NETWORK

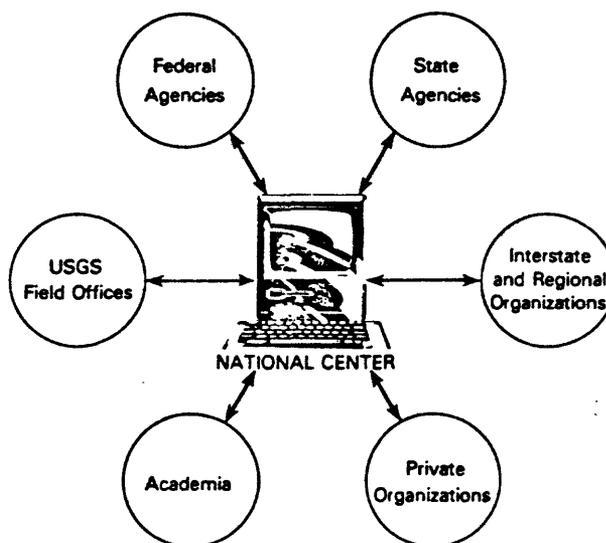


## THE CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS

The following USGS programs perform water-information clearinghouse functions and provide the framework for a formalized National Water-Information Clearinghouse.

- The National Water Data Exchange is a nationwide confederation of more than 300 Federal, State, local, government, academic, and private water oriented organizations that work together to improve access to water data. Its primary objective is to assist members in the identification, location, and acquisition of hydrologic data, and to provide access to the USGS Water-Data Storage and Retrieval System. Services of the Water Data Exchange are available through a computer linked nationwide network of 76 assistance centers in 45 States and Puerto Rico. The Exchange maintains indexes to files of water data collected from more than 450,000 sites (240,000 ground-water sites), and publishes a directory of more than 2,000 organizations that are sources for water data. The Exchange also provides access to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Storage and Retrieval System which contains water-resources data.
- The Water Resources Scientific Information Center acquires, abstracts, and indexes the major water-resources-related literature of the world, and provides this information to the water-resources community. The Center maintains a computerized bibliographic data base, and publishes a monthly journal of abstracts that provides scientific and technical information about the most recent water-resources developments, long-term trends, and changes. In 1987, the Center's data base contained more than 200,000 abstracts, of which about 25,000 are concerned with ground-water issues.
- The Information Transfer Program develops innovative approaches to transfer information and technology developed within the USGS to audiences in the public and private sectors.
- The Hydrologic Information Unit provides responses to a variety of requests, both technical and lay-oriented, for water-resources information, and helps efforts to conduct water-resources research.
- The Water Data Storage and Retrieval System maintains accessible computerized files of hydrologic data collected nationwide, by the USGS and other governmental agencies, from streamgaging stations, ground-water observation wells, and surface- and ground-water quality sampling sites. More than 220 million daily observations related to surface- and ground-water data are maintained. The Water Quality File contains more than 2.5 million analyses of ground and surface water, and the Ground Water Site Inventory contains data from about 1 million wells and springs.

- The Office of Water Data Coordination coordinates the water-data acquisition activities of all agencies of the Federal Government, and is responsible for the planning, design, and interagency coordination of a national water-data and information network.
- The Water Resources Research Institute Program coordinates and evaluates activities performed by 54 Water Resources Research Institutes, including a variety of ground-water contamination studies ranging from field investigations to analysis of socioeconomic issues. The Institutes are located throughout the country—in every State, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands—and are an important water-related information resource to regional and State agencies.



### CLEARINGHOUSE FUNCTIONS

- Data & Information Search Assistance
- Request-Referral Services
- Access to Major Water Databases
- Data Source Identification
- Nationwide Index of Water Data & Information
- Data & Information Source Identification

This illustration depicts some of the clearinghouse functions performed by the U.S. Geological Survey.

For more information about clearinghouse activities, write to:

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