

## SPECIAL NETWORKS AND PROGRAMS

Hydrologic Benchmark Network is a network of 50 sites in small drainage basins around the country whose purpose is to provide consistent data on the streamflow representative of undeveloped watersheds nationwide, and to provide analyses on a continuing basis to compare and contrast conditions observed in basins more obviously affected by human activities. At 10 of these sites, water-quality information is being gathered on major ions and nutrients, primarily to assess the effects of acid deposition on stream chemistry. Additional information on the Hydrologic Benchmark Program can be found at <http://water.usgs.gov/hbn/>.

National Stream-Quality Accounting Network (NASQAN) monitors the water quality of large rivers within the Nation's largest river basins. From 1995 through 1999, a network of approximately 40 stations was operated in the Mississippi, Columbia, Colorado, and Rio Grande basins. For the period 2000 through 2004, sampling was reduced to a few index stations on the Colorado and Columbia so that a network of 5 stations could be implemented on the Yukon River. Samples are collected with sufficient frequency that the flux of a wide range of constituents can be estimated. The objective of NASQAN is to characterize the water quality of these large rivers by measuring concentration and mass transport of a wide range of dissolved and suspended constituents, including nutrients, major ions, dissolved and sediment-bound heavy metals, common pesticides, and inorganic and organic forms of carbon. This information will be used (1) to describe the long-term trends and changes in concentration and transport of these constituents; (2) to test findings of the National Water-Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA); (3) to characterize processes unique to large-river systems such as storage and re-mobilization of sediments and associated contaminants; and (4) to refine existing estimates of off-continent transport of water, sediment, and chemicals for assessing human effects on the world's oceans and for determining global cycles of carbon, nutrients, and other chemicals. Additional information about the NASQAN Program can be found at <http://water.usgs.gov/nasqan/>.

The National Atmospheric Deposition Program/National Trends Network (NADP/NTN) provides continuous measurement and assessment of the chemical constituents in precipitation throughout the United States. As the lead federal agency, the USGS works together with over 100 organizations to provide a long-term, spatial and temporal record of atmospheric deposition generated from a network of 225 precipitation chemistry monitoring sites. This long-term, nationally consistent monitoring program, coupled with ecosystem research, provides critical information toward a national scorecard to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing and future regulations intended to reduce atmospheric emissions and subsequent impacts to the Nation's land and water resources. Reports and other information on the NADP/NTN Program, as well as all data from the individual sites, can be found at <http://bqs.usgs.gov/acidrain/>.

The National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program of the U.S. Geological Survey is a long-term program with goals to describe the status and trends of water-quality conditions for a large, representative part of the Nation's ground- and surface-water resources; provide an improved understanding of the primary natural and human factors affecting these observed conditions and trends; and provide information that supports development and evaluation of management, regulatory, and monitoring decisions by other agencies.

Assessment activities are being conducted in 59 study units (major watersheds and aquifer systems) that represent a wide range of environmental settings nationwide and that account for a large percentage of the Nation's water use. A wide array of chemical constituents will be measured in ground water, surface water, streambed sediments, and fish tissues. The coordinated application of comparative hydrologic studies at a wide range of spatial and temporal scales will

provide information for decision making by water-resources managers and a foundation for aggregation and comparison of findings to address water-quality issues of regional and national interest. Communication and coordination between USGS personnel and other local, State, and federal interests are critical components of the NAWQA Program. Each study unit has a local liaison committee consisting of representatives from key federal, State, and local water resources agencies, Indian nations, and universities in the study unit. Liaison committees typically meet semiannually to discuss their information needs, monitoring plans and progress, desired information products, and opportunities to collaborate efforts among the agencies. Additional information about the NAWQA Program can be found at <http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>.