

A Brief History of The Water Quality Monitoring Workshop – The First 25 Years

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This workshop was started to help meet the goals of the 1988 "Idaho Antidegradation Agreement" (share and disseminate the results of water quality monitoring, assist with the standardization of monitoring methods, and help reduce perceived duplication of monitoring efforts). The workshop was conceived in a water quality meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado, in the fall of 1989, between Bill Clark (IDEQ), Don Martin (USEPA), Steve Bauer (IDEQ), Pete Stender (USFS) and Tim Burton (USFS-IPA to IDEQ). An initial Workshop Steering Committee representing these entities (Burton, Clark, Mike Collette, Ann Puffer, Martin, as well as Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Scott Grunder) and US Bureau of Land Management/US Agricultural Research Service (Karl Gebhardt) coordinated the first workshop in 1991.

The workshop has been an annual event since 1991, thus becoming the longest running in the nation. Emphasis in the first years was on nonpoint source water quality monitoring and issues. The controls placed on point sources following the Clean Water Act and EPA's NPDES program resulted in reduced pollution from those sources. But, Idaho's waters were still impacted, a result of fine sediment which was found to be the single largest pollutant and impact on Idaho's aquatic beneficial uses. The workshop helped coordinate monitoring efforts and results during that time.

In 2000, I presented a summary of the first ten years of the workshops, which had resulted in around 400 presentations and keynote speakers from around the nation. Networking has also been an important aspect of the workshop. In 2007, the title of the meeting was changed (17th Annual Water Quality Conference: Monitoring, Assessment, & Management) to reflect progress made and emerging pollution sources. In 2011 we added "Workshop" back into the title. We are approaching 1,000 presentations for the workshop.