

OW Information Resources - Guiding Principles

On October 30, 2000, OW's Information Steering Committee developed a list of guiding principles for OW's Information Management program. These principles serve a dual purpose: to guide day-to-day management decisions and to identify joint actions that OW can take to improve information management within the office.

The purpose of this document is to describe the guiding principles and sort them into high-level categories. Some principles fall into more than one category and are therefore repeated.

Additionally, some of the principles might appear to conflict with one another. However, there is room to move towards each principle before a conflict would occur. For example, moving toward fewer systems might seem to conflict with ensuring that accountability remains close to home. However, OW can make progress toward reducing number of systems before getting to the point where accountability is no longer close to home. Pairs of potentially conflicting principles are italicized and bracketed within their respective categories. Potential conflicts across categories are shown at the end of the document.

Operational Principles

- Move towards programmatic integration (*i.e.*, become less stove piped)
- Reduce burden to states/tribes
- *Involve all stakeholders by encouraging input (but not necessarily allowing decision-making)*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management*
- Support all core program (*e.g.*, SRF, UIC) and functional areas (*e.g.*, program tracking, monitoring, NHD reaches)
- *Create an open information management process for all parties*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management*
- Encourage public use of data

System Principles

- Support all core program (*e.g.*, SRF, UIC) and functional areas (*e.g.*, enforcement)
- Provide public accessibility to systems
- Minimize (moving towards zero) data duplication (single location)
- Move towards fewer systems

- Start with core systems and get the biggest bang for the buck

Data Principles

- Assume multiple data usage (*i.e.*, change current view of single use...or at least ask the question)
- Collect only needed data
- Collect lat/longs and assign NHD addresses
- Link to other data
- Minimize (moving towards zero) data duplication (single location)
- Ensure core standards
- Ensure known, documented data quality
- Separate data from analysis/function

Investment Principles

- Move towards fewer systems
- Start with core systems & get the biggest bang for the buck
- Minimize system operation, design/development costs
- Minimize transaction cost of state/tribal reporting
- Ask/answer questions of future (flexibility and upgrade-ability)

Accountability Principles

- Promote the idea that administrative data is critical too
- Focus on results-based measurement
- Focus on environmental and public health results
- Ensure accountability remains close to home while also ensuring integration into the bigger picture
- *Involve all stakeholders by encouraging input (but not necessarily allowing decision-making)*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management*
- Provide public accessibility
- *Create an open process for all parties to increase information management support*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management*

Potential Cross-Category Conflicts

- *Reduce burden to states/tribes vs. Ensure accountability remains close to home while also ensuring integration into the bigger picture*
- *Move towards fewer systems vs. Ensure accountability remains close to home while also ensuring integration into the bigger picture*
- *Support all core program (e.g., SRF, UIC) and functional areas (e.g., enforcement) vs. Minimize system operation, design/development costs*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management vs. Create an open process for all parties to increase information management support*
- *Serve key constituents through effective information management vs. Involve all stakeholders by encouraging input (but not necessarily allowing decision-making)*