



NATIONAL GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION

COMMENTS

November 6, 2023

On

U.S. Geological Survey's Agency Information Collection Activities; USGS Water Use Data and Research Program Announcement; Water Use Data and Research Program Feasibility Study

Notice Date: October 6, 2023

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Summary:

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the U.S. Geological Survey is proposing to revise an information collection regarding national water use.

Electronic Link: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/10/06/2023-22293/agency-information-collection-activities-usgs-water-use-data-and-research-program-announcement-water>

National Ground Water Association Comments

Accounting for alternative water sources is essential to the understanding of water availability. Under the current climatic conditions of weather extremes of intense drought and flooding, water source and use alternatives now being employed across multi-state regions of the country should receive national attention to inform national, state and local decision making. NGWA asks the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to incorporate an accounting of water sources used for managed aquifer recharge (MAR). The MAR technology is being widely deployed, documented in 28 states.¹ To provide a better understanding of the water sources used to furnish alternative water supplies for locations needing supplemental water for their sustainability and resilience in confronting continued weather extremes, it is important to identify the water source.

¹ MAR technology has been deployed in AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, HI, ID, IN, IA, KS, KY, MO, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OR, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI. (Source: International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, Delft, the Netherlands. Managed Aquifer Recharge Portal. <https://www.un-igrac.org/news/managed-aquifer-recharge-mar-portal-awareness-raising-and-suitability-mapping>.)



MAR is the purposeful recharge of water to aquifers for subsequent recovery or for environmental benefit. Water sources used to recharge aquifers include surface water from rivers or lakes, captured stormwater, reclaimed wastewater, groundwater drawn from other aquifers or remotely from the same aquifer, treated irrigation return flows, and desalinated water from seawater or brine. Water use from MAR sites may be for domestic drinking water, industrial processing, agricultural irrigation, livestock watering, ecological maintenance including sustaining streamflow, and water quality management purposes. Declining water tables have been reported nationwide, creating conditions in every state for the potential deployment of MAR technology to supplement and provide alternative water supplies.

NGWA recommends on Page One of the document “Interview - Introductory Questions – What geographic area/jurisdiction does your agency serve?” adding the bullet: ‘Groundwater basin or aquifer’

NGWA asks that the USGS consider incorporating under questions 5, 6, 7, and 8 (crop irrigation, livestock watering, industrial and public supply – respectively) an additional element of alternative water source: managed aquifer recharge. To support this reporting, NGWA asks that the survey include collection of data on the sources of managed aquifer recharge waters.

The NGWA is available for further discussion with the USGS regarding these requests.

Basis for NGWA Interest in the USGS Water Use Survey

The National Ground Water Association, the largest trade association and professional society of groundwater professionals in the world, represents over 10,000 groundwater professionals within the United States and internationally. NGWA represents four key sectors: scientists and engineers, water-well contractors, the manufacturers and the suppliers of equipment needed to make groundwater development possible. NGWA’s mission is to advocate for and support the responsible development, management, and use of groundwater.

NGWA’s position is that groundwater should be measured to manage the resource sustainably. Two key priorities of the NGWA are (1) the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network to provide consolidated quantity and quality data of documented quality from across the country (that should be able to be related to water use) and (2) Managed Aquifer Recharge to advance this technology to provide supplemental water in areas affected by extreme weather conditions and intense water demand.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed information collection.

For further follow up, please contact:
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