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## BQS completes relocation to building 95



**MOVING IN**—Hydrologist Jonathan Currier, Project Chief of the National Field Quality Assurance Project (NFQA), installs the mixing apparatus used to prepare pH, specific conductance, and alkalinity samples used to measure the analytical capabilities of field technicians. On August 8, 2005, the Branch of Quality Systems (BQS) moved into building 95, home of the NWQL. The NFQA Project is one of seven within the BQS.



**NEW HOME**—Suranne Horodyski (left) and Delicia Beaty, chemists with the Branch of Quality Systems, get down to work in their new home at the National Water Quality Laboratory in building 95.

The Branch of Quality Systems (BQS) completed its move August 8 to the second floor of the north wing in building 95 at the Denver Federal Center.

“The move itself went extremely well and the new space has proven to be very nice,” according to Terry Schertz, chief, BQS. “We got organized enough to host an Open House September 1 for our new neighbors in the building and many of our existing colleagues,” added Schertz. “The turnout was great and we really appreciate all those who came to welcome us.” Schertz said she was sure that everyone in the building “is glad to have the construction and relocation behind us.”

Phone numbers for BQS staff have not changed. In addition to the 12 employees from BQS, the Office of Water Quality also relocated the following 3 employees to building 95: Mark Nilles, Pete Rogerson, and Janice Ward. In addition, Kenneth Stollenwerk, a ground-water hydrologist in the Branch of Regional Research, moved his lab to building 95, where he joins nine other USGS employees with the National Research Program.



**OPEN HOUSE**—Nora Bender samples the food at an Open House party hosted by the Branch of Quality Systems in building 95 following its relocation to the second floor of the north wing. Nora is a secretary for Surface Water Chemistry in the Regional Research group, which is also housed in the building.

## Organizational changes announced for NWQL

Greg Mohrman, NWQL Chief, and Dave Reppert, Analytical Services Chief, recently announced organizational changes at the National Water Quality Laboratory. With one exception, all of the new appointments report to the Chief of Analytical Services. The following appointments were effective July 25:

- Gary Cottrell accepted the position of Supervisory Chemist and was assigned to lead the Metals Unit.
- Duane Wydowski accepted the position of Supervisory Chemist and was assigned to lead the Gas Chromatography/Gas Chromatography—Mass Spectrometry (GC/GC—MS) Unit.
- Sonja Abney accepted the position of Supervisory Chemist and was assigned to lead the Volatile Organic Carbon (VOC)/Prep Unit.
- Jeff Cahill accepted the position of Supervisory Chemist and was assigned to lead the Physical Properties/Biology Unit.
- Mike Schroeder will continue in his role as Supervisory Chemist and was assigned to lead the Liquid Chromatography (LC)/Sediments Unit.
- Donna Damrau accepted a detail assignment as Acting Chief of the Business Development Team, reporting to the Chief of the NWQL.
- Jeff Pritt was assigned as lead chemist to work on special quality-assurance/quality-control (QA/QC) issues and related technical projects throughout the Analytical Services (AS) Section.
- Harold Ardourel continues in his position as Supervisory Chemist in charge of the Nutrients Unit.

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## Tom Maloney recovering from serious injuries in motorcycle accident

Tom Maloney, chief of the Quality Assurance Section, was involved in a serious motorcycle accident July 8 on his way to work. Injuries included several broken ribs, a punctured lung, and a broken pelvis.



Following surgery and an extended stay in a hospital, Tom was released and confined to a wheelchair. He started using a walker August 29 and is undergoing physical therapy.

**ON THE MEND**—Tom Maloney, chief of the Quality Assurance Section, stopped by the NWQL September 8 for a brief visit with colleagues between physical therapy sessions for injuries from an accident in July. Tom said he felt pretty good and was anxious to get back to work.

## New publications

(NWQL authors in **boldface**)

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

Glassmeyer, S.T., **Furlong, E.T.**, Kolpin, D.W., **Cahill, J.D.**, **Zaugg, S.D.**, **Werner, S.L.**, Meyer, M.T., and Kryak, D.D., 2005, Transport of chemical and microbial compounds from known wastewater discharges—Potential for use as indicators of human fecal contamination: *Environmental Science & Technology*, v. 39, no. 14, p. 5157–5169.

**Burkhardt, M.R.**, **Zaugg, S.D.**, **Burbank, T.L.**, **Olson, M.C.**, and **Iverson, J.L.**, 2005, Pressurized liquid extraction using water/isopropanol coupled with solid-phase extraction cleanup for semi-volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), and alkylated PAH homolog groups in sediment: *Analytica Chimica Acta*, v. 549, p. 104–116.

## Conference, training calendar

Geological Society of America (GSA) Annual Meeting, **October 16–19, 2005**, Salt Lake City, Utah. See <http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/2005/reg.htm>

Quality-Control Sample Design and Interpretation, QW2034, **October 24–28, 2005**, USGS Maine Water Science Center, Augusta, Maine. See <https://gsvaresa08.er.usgs.gov/web-forms/pertrain.nsf>

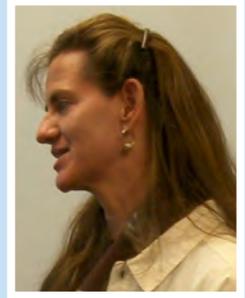
Workshop on Emerging Contaminants and Pharmaceuticals, in conjunction with the 16th Annual South Platte Forum, **October 27, 2005**, Longmont, Colorado; presented by the Consortium for Research and Education on Emerging Contaminants. See <http://www.southplatteforum.org/creec.htm>

5th National Monitoring Conference of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council, co-sponsored by USGS, **May 7–11, 2006**, San José, California. See <http://www.tetratex.com/nwqmc06/>

## Seminar schedule

Tracy J. Baldwin Yager, hydrologist with the Colorado Water Science Center, spoke **June 9** on the “Effects of Biosolids Applications Near Deer Trail, Colorado, 1999–2003, and Next Steps for 2005–2010.”

Gary Cottrell, supervisory chemist of the Metals Unit, presented a talk and showed photographs **June 30** of his trip to Pakistan. The presentation included facilities of the Pakistan Council on Research on Water Resources, as well as people and places in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore.



Tracy Yager

## News briefs

At presstime, the NWQL was scheduled to receive the first shipment of water and bed-sediment samples from the Hurricane Katrina impact zone in Louisiana. The U.S. Geological Survey started water-quality sampling September 13 at several points on Lake Pontchartrain. The NWQL expects to receive weekly shipments of samples through October 7. Inorganic and organic analyses are planned for about 264 surface-water and 68 bed-sediment samples from the lake. The USGS is working with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the sites and type of testing needed.

\* \* \*

New fiscal year 2006 NWQL analytical prices became effective on all samples received on or after October 1.

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Check out the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website at <http://www.epa.gov/nerl/news/forum2005.html>, where there are several articles of interest, including holding-time experimentation, macroinvertebrates, and trace volatile organic compounds and semivolatile organic compounds in sediment.

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The NWQL has received results of an annual audit from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) for use in reaccreditation by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). Audit results and NWQL responses will be posted to the NWQL website.

\* \* \*

The General Services Administration (GSA), which operates the Denver Federal Center (DFC), is remediating contaminated soils on the western side of the Federal Center to support the potential redevelopment of the DFC and to comply with a consent order with the State of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Chemicals in the soil include polyaromatic hydrocarbons and some pesticides. The clean-up work started in August and will continue through the end of the year. During World War II, the DFC was the site of the Denver Ordnance Plant, a munitions manufacturing plant for the war effort.



## Environmental science journal to offer free-access forum

Robert Wershaw, recently retired hydrologist in the USGS Regional Research Branch, reports that he and his coeditors are preparing to launch a peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal dedicated to the findings in all fields of environmental research. The title is *Annals of Environmental Science*.

Wershaw says the new journal will take the place of more traditional, limited-access, paid-subscription scientific journals, which are “becoming less and less accessible because libraries are being forced

to reduce subscriptions in response to rising costs and shrinking budgets.” He said the coeditors of *Annals of Environmental Science* view their mission as “providing a forum for the rapid publication and discussion of the results of research that will be freely accessible to every scientist and interested lay person in the world.”

The coeditors intend to use a publication model that eliminates assessing page charges to contributing authors. Typesetting costs will be eliminated by requesting that authors use a standard template when producing pdf files for

the new journal for online publication. Libraries, in turn, will be encouraged to download the journal and display copies on their periodical shelves, and to distribute as many copies as they need for their patrons.

The coeditors—Wershaw, Geoffrey Davies, and Elham Ghabbour—are soliciting advertising to help pay for the new journal. They intend to use protocols developed by the Open Archives Initiative for keyword searching and retrieving. The first issue will be devoted to review articles on the global carbon cycle.

## New faces

Dave Reppert reports that five new employees have joined Analytical Services:

**Paul Wardrop**, a contract employee, joined the Organic Sample Preparation Unit in August. He recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, with a degree in Zoology.

**Erika Letourneau** was recently hired as a full-time Federal employee in the Physical Properties Unit. She has worked at the NWQL for 3 years as a contract employee in the Organic Sample Preparation Unit. Previously she worked as a student at the NWQL in 1996 and 1997 in the Majors and Carbon groups. **Amy Herrera**, physical science technician, has been hired

as a contract employee to work in the Physical Properties Unit. In addition, **Julie Ray**, another new contract employee, started work September 19 in the Physical Properties Unit.

**Christian Dennis**, a physical science technician, is a new contract employee working in the Liquid Chromatography/Sediment Unit.

Will Lanier has announced that three employees have been hired for Support Services:

**Milton Marshall**, a supply technician, is a new permanent staffer in the Supply Management Unit.

Two new students are working in the Login Unit: **Eathan Gammel** and **Daniel Encinias**.



**THE GANG'S ALL HERE**—The so-called “Gang” held its periodic meeting July 12–14 at the NWQL to discuss policies and procedures relating to the operation of an environmental analytical laboratory. Seated (left to right) are Callie Oblinger, water-quality specialist, Southeastern Region; and Bob Broshears, water-quality specialist, Central Region. Terry Schertz (standing), chief, Branch of Quality Systems; Dan Hippe, water-quality specialist, Eastern Region; and Jim Eychaner, water-quality specialist, Western Region. Also attending, but not shown, were Greg Mohrman, chief, NWQL, and Tim Miller (via conference call), chief, Office of Water Quality in Res-ton.



## ‘Dear Labby’ fields tough question: reanalysis vs. verification request

### Dear Labby,

**Q** My data seems a little strange. When I look at it, the results are not what I was expecting. I think there may be an error somewhere. I don’t know what to do to make sure the data are correct. When I look on the sample status page, I’m confused about how to check my results. What is the difference between a reanalysis and a verification request? What happens when I request a reanalysis, and what happens when I request a verification? Why would I want to do a reanalysis or a verification?

• A CONFUSED DATA USER

### Dear Data User,

**A** The NWQL provides a reanalysis/verification service to customers when there are data questions. Reanalyses and verifications can be requested from the sample status web page at <http://nwql.cr.usgs.gov/usgs/samplestatus/index.cfm>. Free reanalyses are available only when a sample has not exceeded its holding time. If a sample is older than its holding time, the sample status page will only allow a verification request. If the entire

sample has been consumed during the initial analysis, no reanalyses are possible. You may request a verification of the original data. Verifications are available at no cost within 18 months of analysis. For samples older than 18 months, verification requests should be sent to [Labhelp@usgs.gov](mailto:Labhelp@usgs.gov). A small charge may be assessed, depending upon the age of the data. Frequently, verification of data older than 18 months is difficult, and a charge will be incurred because the original data already may have been shipped to the National Archives for storage.

When you request a reanalysis, an analyst will reanalyze the sample. If the result agrees with the original result, no further work is done. The new value is returned to you via e-mail. If the new result does not agree with the original result, the analyst will repeat the reanalysis and reanalyze other samples from the original analysis. At this point, the analyst also will look at the original data file to verify that there were no errors during the initial analysis. The discrepancy will be resolved, and you will receive an e-mail with the reanalysis value and a reason for the difference. At the data

user’s request, Labhelp will gladly exchange the original and reanalysis data in our data base and reload the reanalysis value to the National Water Information System (NWIS).

When a verification request is made, the analyst will pull the original data file. The original data will be reevaluated, with the analyst looking for errors. If no errors are found, the result will be considered “verified.” You will receive an e-mail to that effect. If errors are found, the original result will be corrected, and you will receive updated results and an explanation of the error. The more information you provide on your reanalysis request, the better our chances are of answering your concerns. For example, comments, such as “result is 10 times higher than any previous,” can tell us to look for dilution problems.

The NWQL strongly suggests that data users look at their results BEFORE the sample-holding times have expired and request reanalyses while they are possible. If you have the choice between a reanalysis and a verification, we suggest that you request a reanalysis. Labhelp personnel are eager to help resolve data issues; all you have to do is ask.

• GLENDA BROWN

## Celebrate Earth Science Week October 9–15

Last year, the former Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, Dr. Charles G. Groat, and the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Admiral Charles Lautenbacher, Jr., collaborated to write a statement on the “Importance of Earth Science Education.” The statement, released in recognition of Earth Science Week, was addressed to the American public.

“By 2025, eight billion people will live on Earth,” wrote Groat and Lautenbacher. “If we are to continue to maintain a high quality of life, we need to delve much more deeply into our planet—its processes, its resources, and its environment. Only through earth science education can students come to understand and appreciate our complex planet.”

This year’s theme is “Geoscientists Explore the Earth,” focusing on careers in the geosciences, what geoscientists do, why their work is important to society, and public education about the career types within the geosciences.

• FROM [BLUELINE](#), NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EARTH SCIENCE EDITORS

**GLOBAL STUDY**—Fourteen Japanese scientists toured the NWQL June 13 on a visit to the USGS Colorado Water Science Center in Denver. They attended a 2-day workshop on technology transfer at the Federal Center. The scientists represented the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, in Kyoto, Japan. The scientific team is leading a global study of ground-water resources in the context of population growth and climate change, as part of a new initiative with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization International Hydrologic Program. Gary Cottrell (right), new supervisor of the Metals Unit, led the tour.



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**AWARDS**—Twenty-year pins and certificates were awarded at a Town Hall meeting for NWQL employees August 25. Donna Damrau, the new supervisor of the Business Development Team, is shown receiving her certificate from Greg Mohrman, Lab Chief. In line for his pin is Steve Werner, chemist in the Methods Research and Development Program. Also receiving a 20-year pin was Frank Wiebe, chemist in the GC/MS Unit, who was not present for the photograph.

