

Handout for November 27, 2023 WQGIT: Submersion Series and WQGIT agenda time review

Compiled by Jeremy Hanson, CRC, WQGIT Coordinator and WQGIT leadership team. Version: 11/22/2023

Note: Part 1 is a compilation of ideas, notes, reflections and information that comes from various discussions with WQGIT leadership, planning team and webinar leads, that are not attributed for our purposes here. We deeply appreciate and acknowledge the incredible contributions from all planning team members, content leads, speakers, and attendees. This information is provided for WQGIT background and discussion purposes, and additional details or context can be provided if requested. Part 2: Overall WQGIT time distribution 2022-2023 is a summarized breakdown of our agendas from 2022 through 2023 so far, including the November 27th meeting. Information in both Part 1 and Part 2 will help responding to our live Mentimeter exercise. Some additional information, such as the anonymous feedback from submersion series participants in Part 1, is provided more as bonus or complementary context for those who are interested.

Part 1: Overview of Submersion Series so far

We launched the Submersion Series as a new approach to dedicate time to important topics and discussions that we otherwise struggle to fit into monthly WQGIT agendas. This approach also intended to achieve other benefits, such as attracting new participants or perspectives, and ideally sparking new ideas, exchanges or collaboration.

The first two sessions were held on June 6 and September 14, 2023. A third session was pushed to early 2024 due to volunteers' availability and to avoid year-end holiday conflicts thereby preserving adequate time to plan. This third session is expected on January 31st, 2024 (start time not yet confirmed).

The format and approach has been effective thus far, following this general formula:

- Two (max three) volunteers serve as “content leads” for the session. Content leads work closely together and are able to move quickly as a duo or small team to agree on the key details, such as an agenda and prospective speakers.
 - So far, there have been planning teams of other volunteers from the WQGIT who contribute ideas via one or two planning calls. This has been very helpful but may not be necessary if we wish to reduce demand on volunteers.
 - WQGIT leadership and planning team start with a general topic or theme, and the content leads have the latitude to refine the plan from there based on desired format and available speakers.
- WQGIT Coordinator acts as “host.” I.e., provides guidance and supports with scheduling, Zoom, posting materials, distributing flyers, uploading recording, etc.
- Sessions thus far have been 90 minutes. This allows greater depth than a 1-hour format, and generally WQGIT leadership has heard and agrees that two hours would feel too long, require adding breaks, etc.

Reflection

- This approach can be sustained, all else being equal. It is heavily dependent on the content leads, by design, and we have been very fortunate so far in our first three webinars.
 - Caveat: First two webinars the leads were relatively simple with volunteers identified very early, whereas the 3rd webinar took a little more effort/outreach to identify leads, but is now well underway.
 - Potential improvement: In 2024 and future years we may be able to plan farther ahead if we identify themes and prospective content leads in advance.
- Perhaps triannual is more reasonable than quarterly and gives us more flexibility to accommodate other activities that the WQGIT may require.

Some other reflections from planning team participants:

- WQGIT members have intimate knowledge and in-depth experience with day-to-day regulatory and programmatic functions, but the WQGIT's time is very focused on modeling and accounting.
- Submersion Series topics and discussions have some overlap and push-pull dynamics with the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee (B25SC) efforts. Unclear if we (WQGIT) should be ahead or behind, but perhaps the series can be leveraged for some of the B25SC purposes.
- Perhaps WQGIT can explore how partners or partnership can more effectively incorporate and operationalize qualitative information into planning or decision-making, whereas so much of our focus is on quantitative (e.g., CAST).

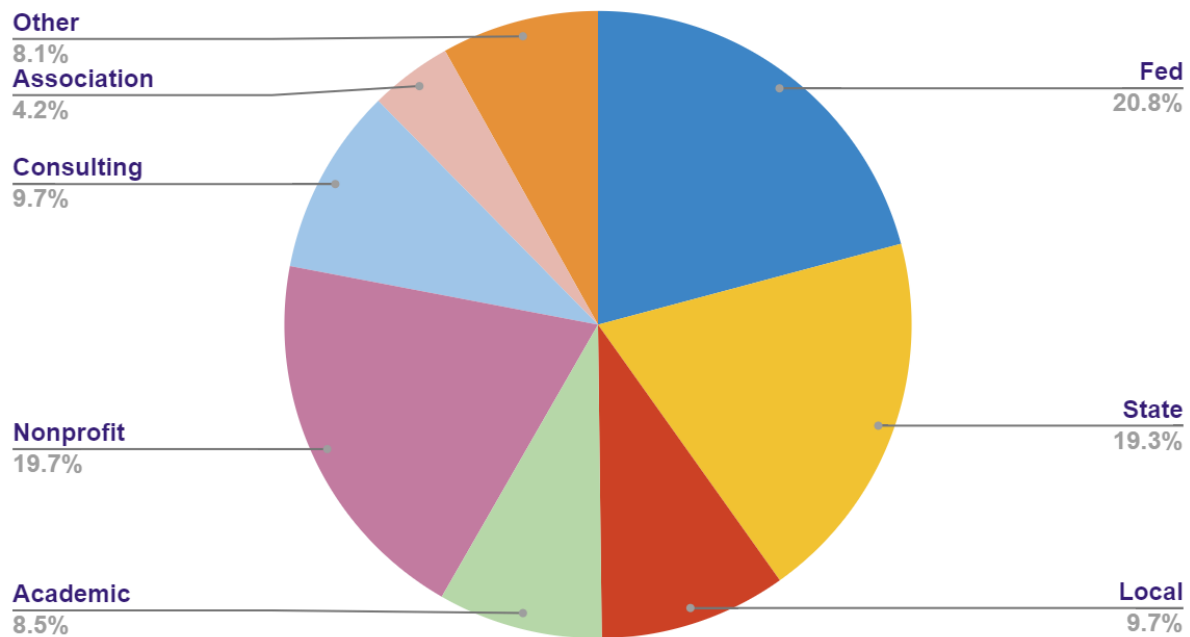
Submersion Series participation and engagement summary

Date	Title/topic	# Registered	# Live participant	YouTube views (as of late Oct.)	Total views (Live + YouTube)
6/6/23	Reviewing our accounting framework: how can we promote innovation and outcome-based management? [Link]	121	86	62	148
9/14/23	Making science work for you: How to strengthen connection between WQ studies and ag conservation [Link]	141	96	76	172
TBD (Jan 31 2024)	Enhancing Technical Assistance and Capacity at the Local Level	-	-	-	-
TBD Q1 2024	TBD: Monitoring follow-up?	-	-	-	-
TBD Q2 2024	TBD: Social science?	-	-	-	-
TBD Q3 2024	TBD	-	-	-	-
TBD Q4 2024	TBD	-	-	-	-

Registration summary

We did not explicitly track the type of affiliation of all live attendees, but the Zoom registration collects affiliation and email, which is summarized in aggregate below, for the total of all registrations in June and September. The distribution for both sessions was relatively consistent from June to September, with the biggest shifts in “Federal” and “Consultants” which shifted from 14 to 26% and 12.5 to 7.2%, respectively, from June to September. Other types had smaller changes between the two sessions.

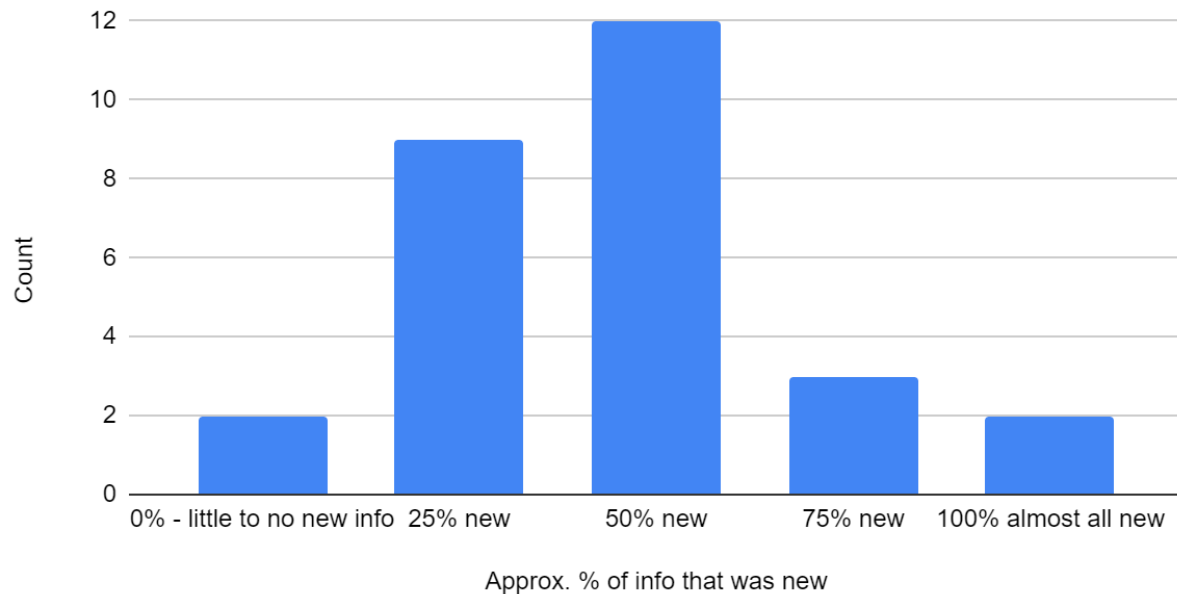
Total registrations by affiliation type



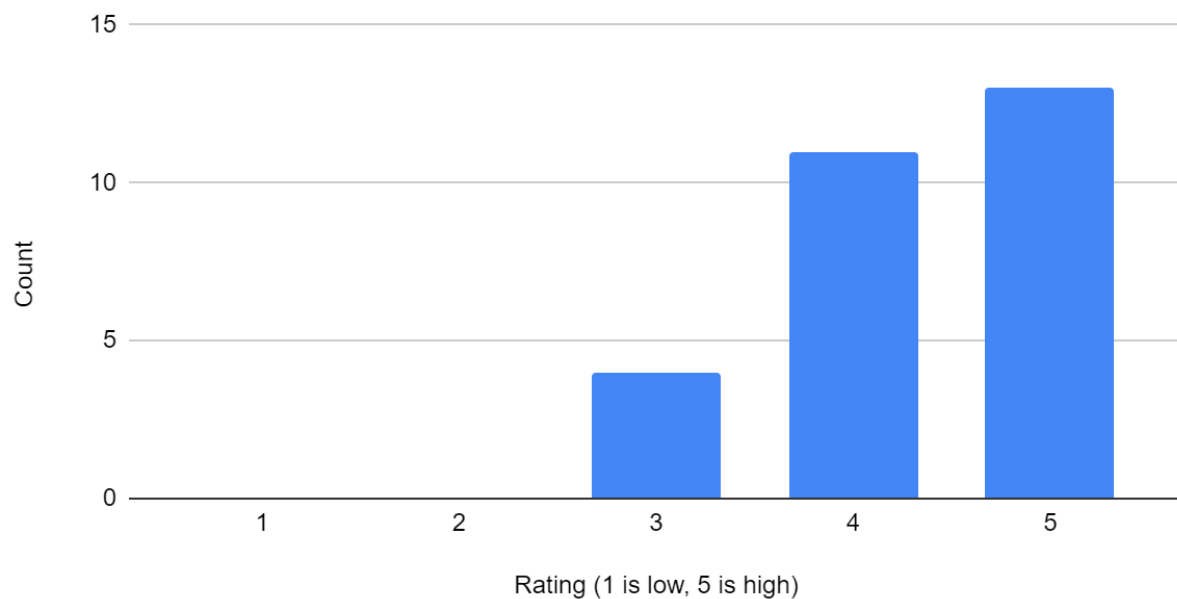
Bonus information: Feedback form standardized assessment questions

For all following graphs, N = 28 combined, 12 in June, 16 in September

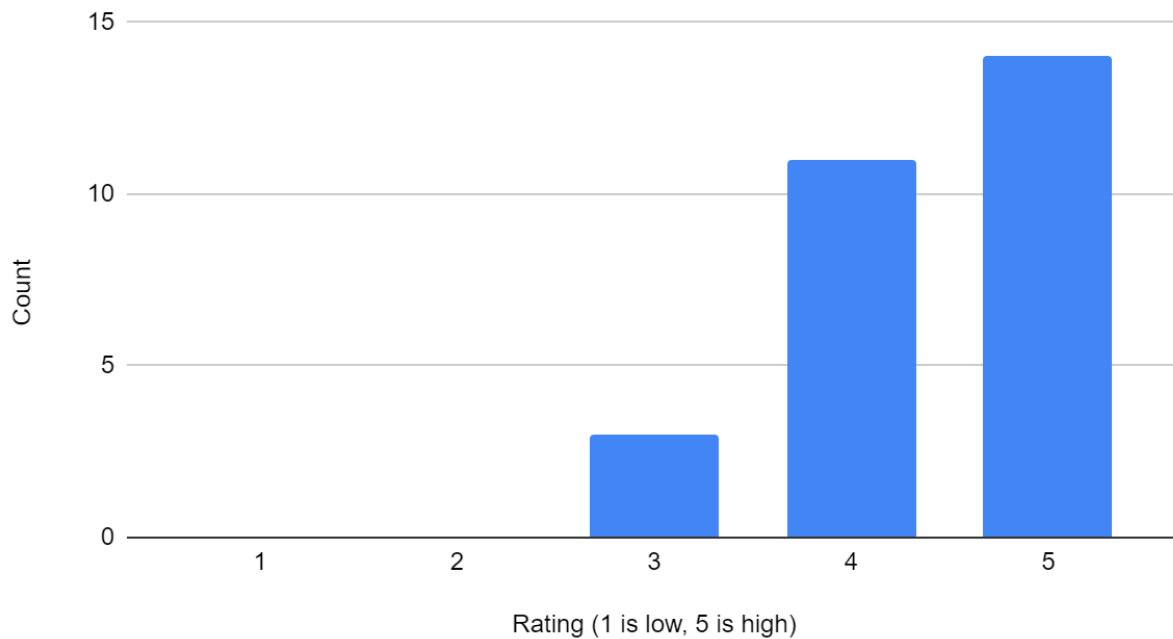
Question 1: What percentage of the information in this session was new to you?



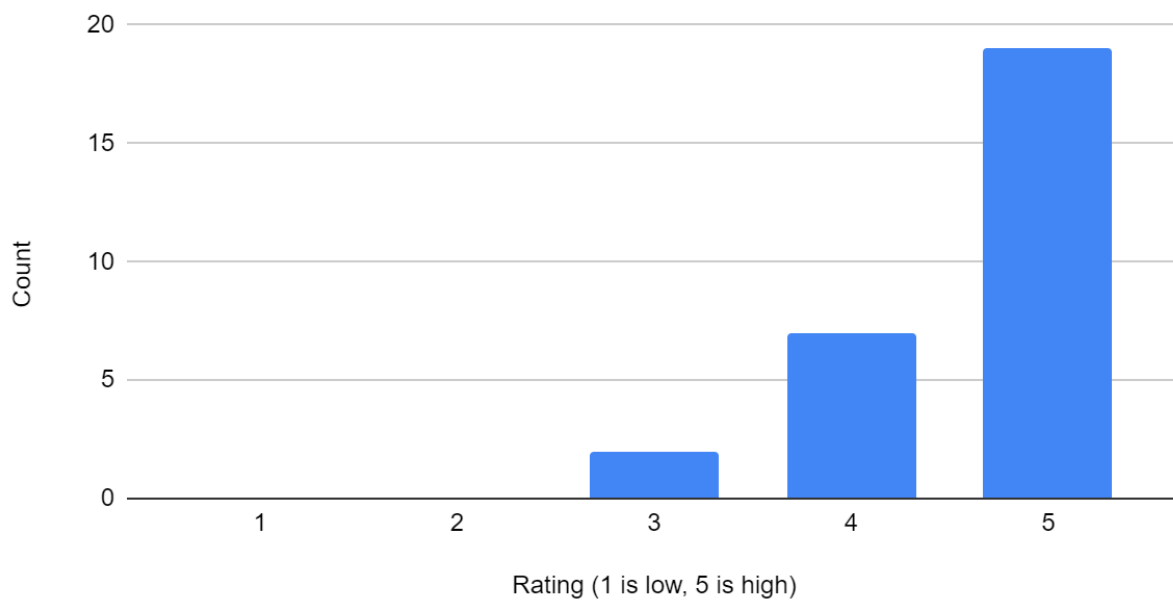
Question 2: How relevant and helpful do you think this topic was?



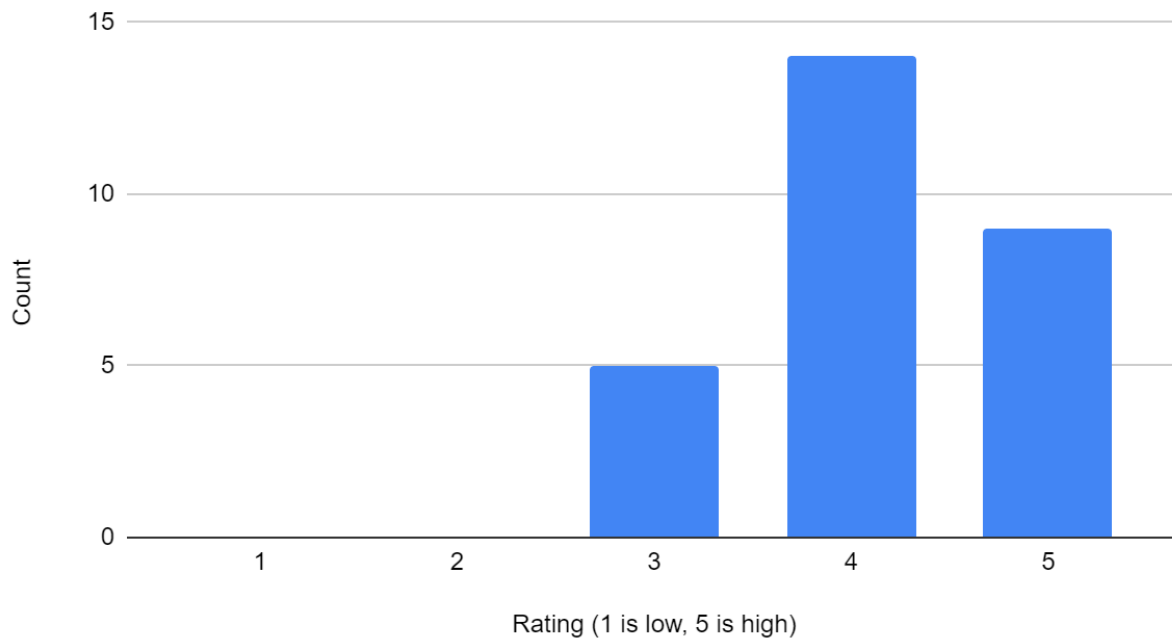
Question 3: How satisfied were you with the session content?



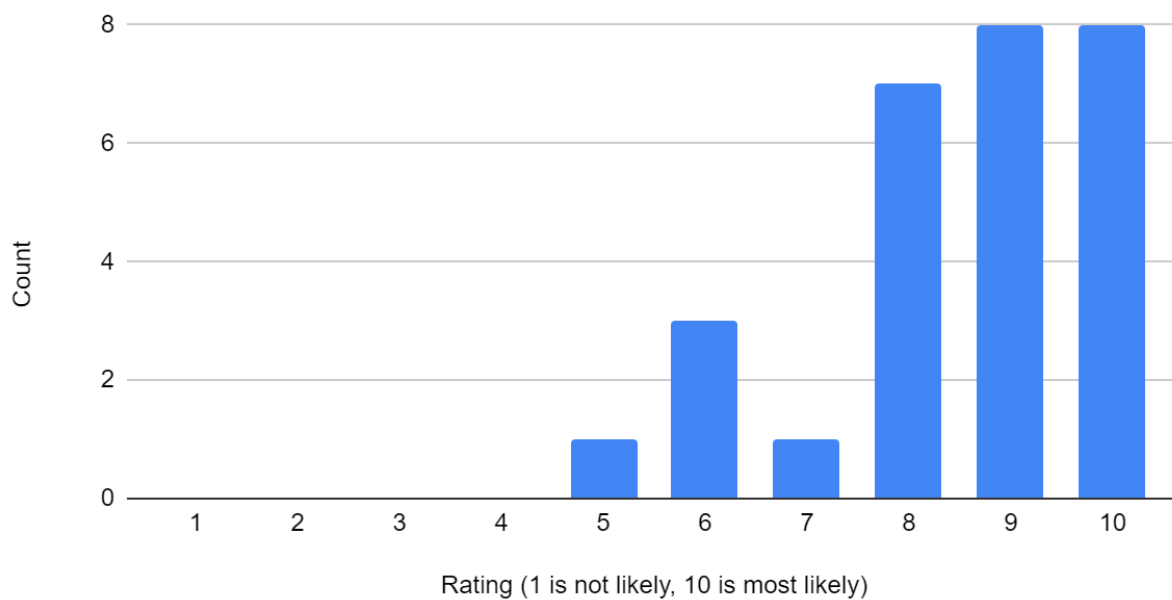
Question 4: Please rate the speakers' overall knowledge of the topic and quality of presented information



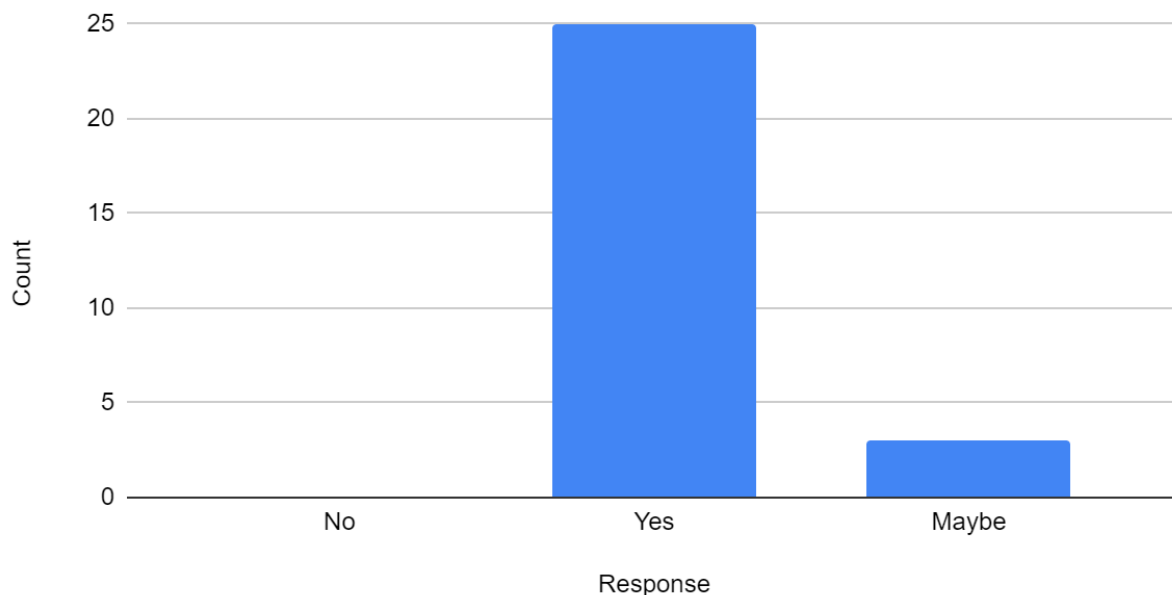
Question 5: Please rate the quality of the facilitated discussion



Question 6: How likely are you to recommend this webinar or webinar series to others?



Question 7: Will you attend a Submersion Series discussion like this again?



Bonus information: Feedback form's two short answer questions

Question: What were your key thoughts or takeaways? (phrased slightly differently for June and September)

June 6: Reviewing our accounting framework: how can we promote innovation and outcome-based management? 6 responses	Sept 14: Making science work for you: How to strengthen connection between WQ studies and ag conservation 8 responses
Great conversation starter for how to move forward outside of the confines of our current structure.	We must focus our efforts on hotspot areas and enhance the model(s) with these data.
I believe it helped launched a more in-depth and complete conversation that needs to occur regarding the topics. Having this done in a more structured format as this workshop helps tamp down randomness that may occur for certain topics and helps steer the conversation towards potential long-term actions that should be taken.	We need to focus new science on collecting the data appropriate for statistical models so we can more clearly determine causal links between BMPs and improvements in monitored water quality parameters. We also need to spend more time on outreach and communication to support the implementation of existing scientifically informed BMPs.
I think there is a disconnect between what people perceive the model influencing and what is actually driving practice adoption and implementation. Much of our issues are with slow, cumbersome, federal programs that slow down	There is a lot of efforts occurring in the watershed. It would be nice to have a companion webinar on the implementation itself as a social science. How can we increase voluntary agricultural implementation in these small priority watersheds.

progress and make farmers/landowners not interested in going through the process.	
There is strong disconnect between the issues seen by the people "on the ground" working with landowners, and the people making decisions. Conservation districts have plenty of money and are able to feed the current model, but our hands are tied from funding agencies on how we can appropriate our funds. Much of the decision making has been taken from local Boards.	Although we saw an even balance in the menti polls, I think that means that we are not in agreement as to what the priority actions/focus need to be. I do think it's helpful to give us some direction on where to go next, but I think we need more GIT discussions to pick a path forward. Maybe we need a STAR/WQGIT joint meeting to build consensus around a direction or two or to coalesce around ideas for what we could pursue with either GIT funding or other funding for research needs or tools to develop or modify.
We need to use the right tools for the job, meaning CAST is not a universal tool. Similarly, we need to keep in mind the limitations of the TMDL when making decisions.	We need data to drive policy and funding decision making.
That a new version of the model may be needed.	That targeting of BMPs is key
	That conservation strategies alone as they are currently being implemented are not enough to address the nutrient mass balance issues within the watershed that are the primary contributors to poor water quality
	I enjoyed the Virginia specific information.

Question: Overall feedback?

Combined 11 responses; 5 in June + 6 in September

Need to engage all partners, after this webinar, I was on a STAC workshop that almost felt like a conversation going in the opposite direction (how do we credit more services as opposed to getting away from crediting).
I think adding in some federal perspective on how the funding coming from farm bill/other pots could or will be used for outcome based funding.
I enjoyed the webinar, however I would recommend not having to jump to another site to take a survey if there is a better option.
One recommendation for future webinars in the discussion period: limit the scope of the discussion and ensure participants are on the same page about what is being discussed. This could be done by using consistent, specific, and narrower framing of discussion questions. I make this suggestion because at times during the discussion, it felt like participants were talking past one another, which made it difficult to draw conclusions from the conversation.
While a new version of the model may indeed be justified and needed, all versions have their flaws. I would hope that reporting mechanisms to any new model would remain the same or similar. More information should be provided to entities that report.
I liked how you split the webinar into two components and wove mentimeter throughout. It provided a nice structure to the meeting.

This was really informative but there was no time for discussion. I think if the idea was to just be informational it worked perfectly but if there was intended discussion it should have been split into multiple sessions.
It was interesting to note that in Dr. Nardi's presentation, CEAP was not captured in the sub watershed or watershed data gap that was identified. A lot of citations were shared otherwise during the webinar.
I liked the format. It was clear and concise. I liked the truly brief presentations. I think it would have been nice to have a little more group discussion, but I think we needed this high level menti question focus before we could step into further discussions. The session was well planned and laid out. There were good thought provoking menti questions. I liked the pace and flow of the content provided and the group engagement.
The session had good information.
I hope we can build on this conversation to discuss effective ways to address the mass balance issue through policy changes

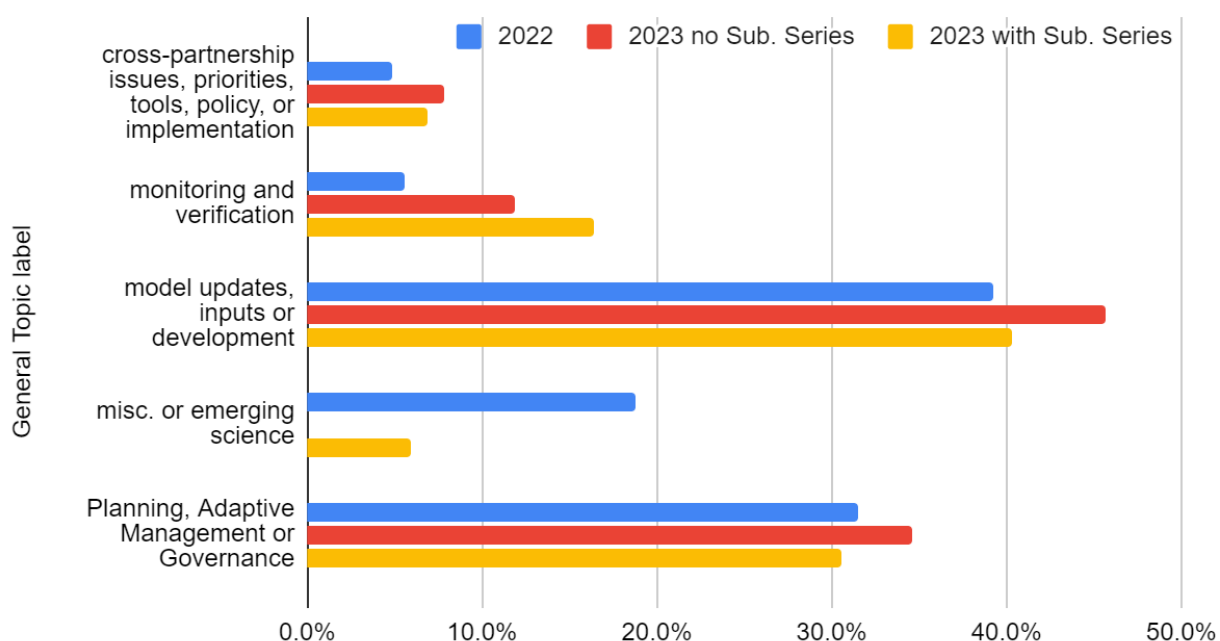
Part 2: Overall WQGIT time distribution 2022-2023

WQGIT by the numbers 2022-2023...

	2022	2023 (through October mtg)
Decisions	Consensus reached on 7 of 10 decision items	Consensus reached on 12 of 12 decision items <u>Including:</u> PSC decisions 1-3; New wetland credit durations; 1 new indicator; 2 BMP panel reports; WQGIT at-large members; New Forestry and Wastewater workgroup leadership; updated scope + purpose for WTWG and LUWG
Action items marked complete	Over 50 action items completed	28 of 37 total action items completed or past; others in progress or are ongoing items

The following chart and table are based on totals from the topic labels included on the agendas since 2022. For the small number of 2022 meeting agendas prior to the current agenda template we applied these labels. We do not have similar data for previous years and will not be compiling it. The general topic labels are highly aggregated and may not always be accurate since they evolved on an ad hoc basis. There is certainly overlap in some of these labels that is not represented in these totals and we only apply one label when something might otherwise involve multiple categories. For example, SRS and other planning or modeling discussions certainly speak about monitoring data, trends or tools. The purpose here is to give a general sense of how the WQGIT has spent its time with simplified, not comprehensive, data.

WQGIT agenda distribution by category, 2022-2023



	2022		2023 through Nov. 27 agenda		2023, w/ Sub. Series included	
General Topic label	2022 total (mins)	2022 (%)	2023 total	2023 (%)	2023 total	2023 (%)
Beyond 2025	20	1.2%	40	3.0%	40	2.6%
BMP Resilience	30	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
CBC	30	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Climate-change; cross partnership (STAC)	0	0.0%	45	3.3%	45	3.0%
Local governments	0	0.0%	20	1.5%	20	1.3%
<i>Subtotal – cross-partnership issues, priorities, tools, policy, or implementation</i>	80	4.9%	105	7.8%	105	6.9%
Monitoring/STAR	90	5.6%	0	0.0%	+90	5.9%
BMP Verification	0	0.0%	160	11.9%	160	10.5%
<i>Subtotal – monitoring and verification</i>	90	5.6%	160	11.9%	250	16.4%
BMP Panel	100	6.2%	85	6.3%	85	5.6%
Model Inputs or Processing	30	1.9%	60	4.5%	60	3.9%
Phase 6 CAST	395	24.4%	410	30.5%	410	26.9%
Phase 7 Model Development	110	6.8%	60	4.5%	60	3.9%
<i>Subtotal – model updates, inputs or development</i>	635	39.2%	615	45.7%	615	40.3%
Science Publication and Reports	140	8.6%	0	0.0%	+90	5.9%
Science Updates	165	10.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<i>Subtotal – misc. or emerging science</i>	305	18.8%	0	0.0%	90	5.9%
Indicators & Progress	75	4.6%	120	8.9%	120	7.9%
SRS	360	22.2%	35	2.6%	35	2.3%
WQGIT & Workgroup Governance	0	0.0%	60	4.5%	60	3.9%
WQGIT Governance	30	1.9%	40	3.0%	40	2.6%
WQGIT Governance & Planning	0	0.0%	30	2.2%	30	2.0%
WQGIT Planning	30	1.9%	140	10.4%	140	9.2%
GIT Funding	15	0.9%	40	3.0%	40	2.6%
<i>Subtotal – Planning, Adaptive Management or Governance</i>	510	31.5%	465	34.6%	465	30.5%
Total minutes	1620		1345		1525	