

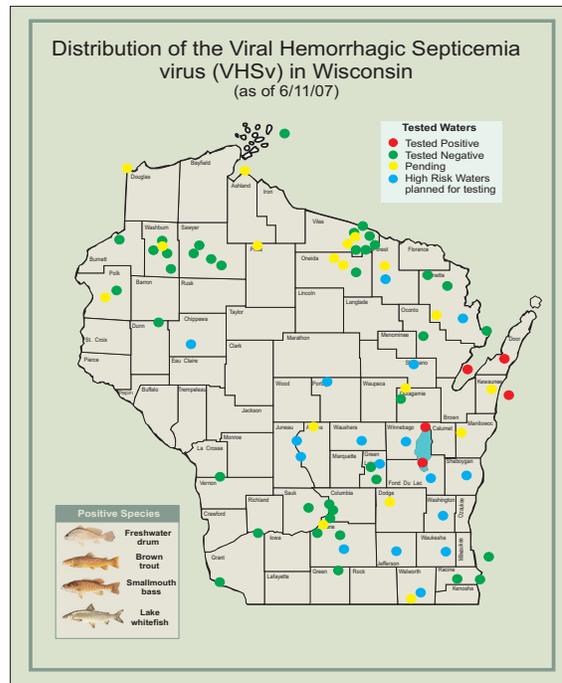
Summer 2007

VHS - What it Means for Citizen Stream Monitors

Chances are you have heard something about Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in recent weeks. If not, according to the Department of Natural Resources' website (<http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/pages/vhsfacts.html>), it's a fish disease that is not harmful to people who handle or eat the fish, but it can kill or injure many types of game fish, such as muskies, walleye, trout, bluegill, smallmouth bass, and northern pike, among others.

The state Natural Resources Board adopted emergency rules in April to help minimize the spread of this virus from waterbody to waterbody. The rules require that no bait or water can be moved from areas where the virus is suspect to be. Further, people who work to monitor waterbodies of the state are being asked to follow steps to disinfect items that contacted the infested waters, including boats and equipment. Currently waters draining to Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, the Mississippi River and within the Lake Winnebago System are affected by the rules. They may be expanded to include all waters of the state if the virus is found outside of these watersheds.

What this means to citizen monitors is that if you monitor in a waterbody that is included on the infested waters list, you should disinfect equipment prior to moving it to another waterbody. This includes hip boots, nets, transparency tubes, sampling bottles, etc. - anything that has come into contact with the infested waters.



Many sites have tested negative for VHS, but safety precautions against spreading the virus are still necessary.

There are two main ways to address these new rules:

1. The simplest way will work for most citizen monitors. Basically, the rule is to dry your equipment out thoroughly before using it in another waterbody. It should initially dry and then remain dry for 5 consecutive days.
2. Alternatively, for the small number of citizens who monitor in infested waters AND who monitor multiple waterbodies or who share equipment with another group that monitors a different waterbody, you should disinfect your equipment after using it. Comprehensive information about how to do this is available on the DNR's website (http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/documents/disinfection_protocols.pdf) but is summarized sufficiently for most citizen monitors below.

Disinfection Protocols

Remember, drying equipment thoroughly is the easiest way to ensure you're not spreading VHS. But if you do monitor multiple waterbodies that are included on the infested waters list you should take the following precautions:

Scrub personal protective gear (including boots/waders) with disinfection solution. After scrubbing, gear should be kept wet with disinfection solution.

Table 1. Disinfectant, target species and proper use (adapted from WDNR disinfection protocols)

Reason to Treat	Chemical	Concentration	Contact Time
VHS	Chlorine	200 ppm (1 Tblspn/gal)	10 min.

tion for the appropriate contact time (see Table 1 for time). The rinse it with clean water or water from the next waterbody. Every effort should be made to keep the disinfection solution and rinse water out of surface waters.

Two options exist for disinfecting small equipment (such as nets, transparency tubes, D.O. sample bottles, measuring tapes, etc.).

1. Spray equipment with disinfection solution and maintain a wet surface for the appropriate contact time (see Table 1 for time). Then rinse it with clean water or water from the next waterbody before it is used again.
2. Place the equipment in a tub filled with disinfection solution for the appropriate contact time (see Table 1 for time). Then rinse it with clean water or water from the next waterbody before it is used again.

Large equipment can be disinfected by first removing organic material from it (such as weeds). Then the equipment should be sprayed or wiped with the disinfection solution and left wet for the appropriate contact time (see Table 1 for time). The equipment should be rinsed with clean water or water from the next waterbody before it is used again.

A word of caution! If you monitor using D.O. and pH meters with the level 2 program, you should not disinfect the probes of these meters with the bleach disinfection solution. Instead this gear should be treated by draining excess water and rinsing with tap water followed by another rinse and storage in de-ionized water. The outer cases, cables, and other apparatus associated with these types of gear should still be treated with

one of the above procedures.

Do You Monitor Infested Waters?

Most WAV monitors do not monitor multiple waterbodies, so we have not provided a list of infested waters. However, you can view the list at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/pages/vhs.html>. Look in the left hand column for "Waters

Covered by Rules". There are separate lists for Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Winnebago, and the Mississippi River. You can also contact Kris Stepenuck (kris.stepenuck@ces.uwex.edu or 608-265-3887) with questions.

Two new websites debut

Over the past 2 years a Citizen-based Water Monitoring Network has been developing. This Network developed from existing programs such as WAV and the Citizen Lakes Monitoring Network. It has multiple levels in which citizens can choose to participate in water monitoring activities.

To help explain the three levels of the Network and to provide resources to citizens who participate in the monitoring efforts, a new website has been developed. You can find it at: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu>

At the same time the Network website was being developed, we took the opportunity to revamp the Water Action Volunteers Program website. It's available at: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav>. Some highlights from the new WAV site include:

- Video training clips for all WAV parameters
- Printable data sheets and methods
- Updated listings for local programs
- Expanded resources for local coordinators (and others) including PowerPoint presentations you can use locally, and detailed information about and photos of macroinvertebrate families of Wisconsin.
- Online reporting forms for your storm drain stenciling or river clean up efforts.
- And much, much more! Check it out!

WAV Stream Monitoring Celebrates 10 Years!



A spring 2007 WAV training site.

WAV's stream monitoring program was first piloted in late 1996 and spring 1997. Back then, there were just three pilot groups participating in the effort. Today, there are over 1500 students and 200 adults who monitor streams of Wisconsin as part of the WAV program with more than 45 local programs. More than 500 sites on 275 streams are registered in the online database (with about 120 sites monitored annually). Plus, monitoring groups are regularly expanding their efforts to participate in level 2 and 3 monitoring. Thanks for all your efforts!