

Stream Monitoring News

Summer 2008

Save The Date

Mark your calendars for our second Stream Monitoring Symposium to be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009. The symposium will take place either in Stevens Point or Wausau and will be open to all interested stream monitors.

The agenda will be announced at a later time. This event will help you use monitoring to reach your goals, whether they are education, advocacy, stream protection and restoration, or simply enjoyment.

Welcome Deb Deppeler!

We would like to welcome Deb Deppeler as the Data Manager for Level 2 of the Citizen-Based Stream Monitoring Program.

Deb has been involved as a volunteer with Level 2 monitoring since its first year, 2006. Currently, she monitors with members of the Rock River Coalition at Token Creek, in Dane County.

Deb is working part-time for our program and also teaches computer science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Deb has been giving the database a facelift. She has been entering in new monitoring sites and volunteer information, downloading thermistor data, and establishing quality assurance procedures. Her efforts are helping to ensure a stronger citizen based monitoring program.



Margaret Oliver and students monitor the Pike River on the campus of Carthage College in Kenosha.

Join Others to Protect Our Waters From VHS

Have you heard about VHS? That's Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia, but known more commonly as VHS.

Last year VHS was found in the Lake Winnebago System and Lake Michigan. According to the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) website (<http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/vhs/>), it's a fish disease that is not harmful to people.

However, VHS can kill or injure many types of game fish, such as muskies, walleye, trout, bluegill, smallmouth bass, and northern pike. It is unknown how the virus entered Wisconsin's waters, but moving fish or water from one water body to another can spread the disease. Thus, the State Natural Resources Board has adopted rules to help prevent the spread of the disease. Most of the rules relate to movement of fish between waters, but some parts of the rules and other guidelines have been developed that apply directly to you as a volunteer monitor as you may inadvertently move water between sites.

Ways you can help:

Dry your equipment

This method will work for most citizen monitors. 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.

Disinfect your equipment

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. Contact Chris Clayton (christopher.clayton@wisconsin.gov or 608.257.2424 x 120) for details about this process.

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Stream Monitoring Updates

Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network

Note: There are stream/river, lake and wetland monitoring projects within the Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network, but we focus on streams in this article. For more information on each level, go to: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu>

Individuals and groups get involved with stream monitoring for many different reasons. Use of the data collected is equally diverse. Whether you attended a Water Action Volunteers (Level 1) or Level 2 stream monitoring training, or if you monitor with a Level 3 project, such as the Ephemeral Ponds Monitoring Project (WEPP), you are a part of the Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network.

The Network includes three levels to accommodate the varied interests and time availability of citizens. Most everyone who monitors streams initiates participation in Level 1 (Water Action Volunteers). After that, citizens can choose to participate in Level 2, which is status and trends monitoring, or Level 3 special projects.

The Value of Each Level

Level 1 The Water Action Volunteers Program (WAV) is a great way to be introduced to stream monitoring. You learn how to monitor, as well as how the parameters you monitor are connected to one another and to our uses of the land.

Level 2 Additional training and equipment is required for those who move on to Level 2. Monitors collect status and trends data in association with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by following DNR protocols for monitoring. Your efforts are valuable because the DNR does not have the resources to monitor the whole state.

Level 3 Groups and individuals who monitor for special projects, also known as Level 3 projects, work directly with regional staff at the DNR or other researchers at the UW (or beyond), to collect data to answer a specific research question.

Ultimately, the goal of the overall Network is that the data you collect will be used to help you and others understand and manage streams and protect water quality today and into the future.

A Local Program Example: CWTU

The stream monitoring done by Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited (CWTU) demonstrates a group's involvement in all levels of the Network. By outlining their program, we hope to help you understand the three levels and the integration between them.

CWTU's involvement in WAV began in 2005. Individuals not only completed volunteer training, but they also became trainers. In 2006, the group supported over 20 new monitors. Several individuals also chose to participate in Level 2 which involved learning to use DNR methods and equipment. Others chose to learn to identify macroinvertebrates to family level in a Level 3 research project. Through these experiences, CWTU established relationships with county and DNR staff (including stream and fisheries biologists). In 2007 CWTU volunteers were asked to monitor a stream on the State's impaired waters list. In 2008 these partnerships continued and the citizens were called upon to monitor three headwater streams. Their efforts are being used to provide data for restoration projects for fish habitat in those streams (another Level 3 project). CWTU continues to support WAV and Level 2 stream monitors by hosting an annual training for each level.



Students at Galesville Ettrick Trempealeau High School monitor Beaver Creek in Trempealeau County.

CWTU has developed a program that includes all levels of the Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network. Volunteers initiate their participation through the WAV (Level 1) program, and many opt to monitor at this level on an ongoing basis. Some of those WAV volunteers choose to participate in Level 2 and/or Level 3 monitoring. This meets our overall Network expectation that a subset

of people will opt to monitor at higher levels based on their specific interests and time availability (see figure below). By working up through the monitoring levels, participants build a knowledge base about stream monitoring and stream ecology. Ongoing interaction between citizens and local biologists allows trust to be built through developing relationships. Ultimately, partnerships form which can result in implementation of special research projects involving citizen monitors (i.e., Level 3 projects).

In summary, the three levels of stream monitoring work together to provide citizens a solid basis of education, support, and networking to result in successful monitoring now and into the future.

The Advisory Team

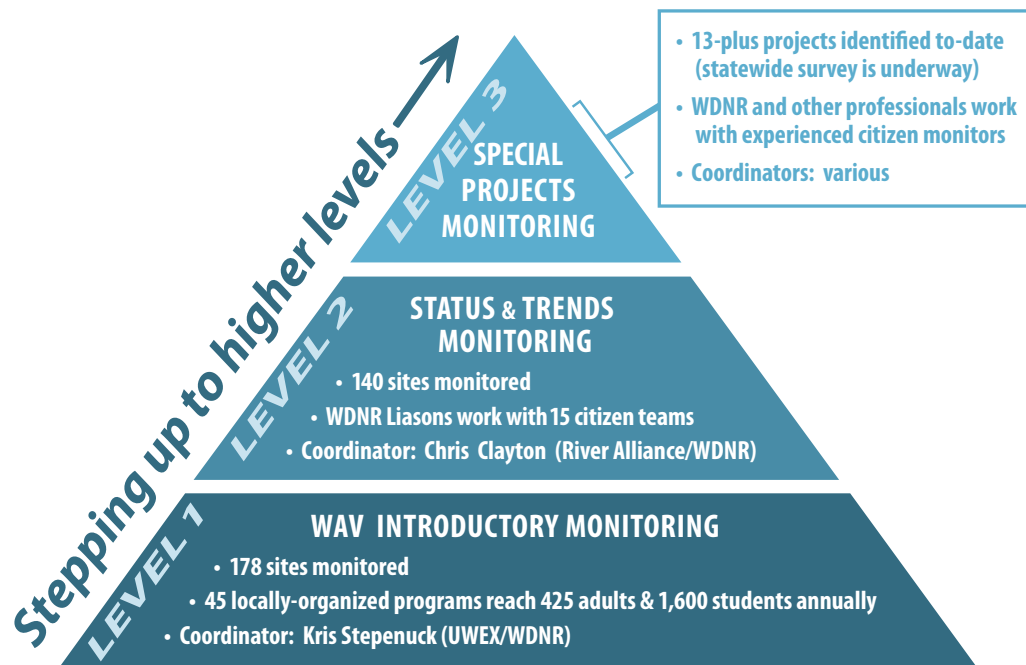
The advisory team of the Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network is comprised of representatives from the River Alliance of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin-Extension, and DNR. The team has completed a final

report on the Level 2 Citizen-Based Stream Monitoring Pilot Project and presented it to DNR management. Highlights from the report include:

- 1) Citizens can successfully collect high quality data about streams with proper training, equipment and support;
- 2) If the DNR wants to maintain and grow the program, sustained and increased administrative and financial support are needed;
- 3) DNR monitoring needs and schemes should be identified and communicated to the citizen monitoring program in order to best integrate with citizen monitors, and;
- 4) Consistent sampling methods and protocols should be developed for DNR staff so they can be shared with and utilized by citizens.

We also recognize the importance of the partnership between the DNR, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and UW-Extension. UW-Extension and DNR continue to support the WAV Coordinator position through grants. We are

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For more information, visit:
<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu>

currently working towards establishing a new DNR position to coordinate Level 2 monitoring. River Alliance is seeking new funding to support a new Level 3 project coordinator position to help build connections between local groups and DNR biologists for special projects monitoring. We will continue to keep you updated on developments within the program. We appreciate all your time and support as we learn how to sustain and grow the program to be most effective for water protection and restoration.



An ephemeral creek near Madison.

Communicating Results Back to You and Your Communities

UW-Madison's Dr. Bret Shaw was intrigued by volunteer monitoring and the methods we use to communicate results. Thus, he initiated a project to discover how citizens prefer to receive information and what motivates volunteers to participate. Level 2 stream monitors were recently surveyed, and responses will be used to develop a communications strategy to increase the visibility and impact of our program. In the coming year, Bret and graduate student Elizabeth Goers will be working with us to do a better job of sharing data results within your communities and to decision makers to help protect and/or restore our water resources today and for the future. We welcome your ongoing feedback to this program and assistance in assuring that our work serves to protect the health of Wisconsin's streams and watersheds.

Local Programs Obtain Grants

Kudos to you, stream monitors! Stream monitoring proposals outnumbered all other types of citizen monitoring proposals in the recent DNR Partnership Program Fund call for proposals. Our program has greater success than most others in writing successful proposals for this funding source. Your efforts on the ground and in the grant writing process are many!

Congratulations to two groups that were awarded funding this year to conduct stream monitoring. Beaver Creek Citizen Science Center in Fall Creek will expand their involvement in the Water Action Volunteers (Level 1) stream monitoring. They will conduct a series of WAV monitoring workshops in Eau Claire, Barron, Rusk, Chippewa, Dunn and Clark Counties next spring. Friends of Allen Creek in Koshkonong will build upon an ongoing research project (Level 3) along the creek. They'll add to their monthly lab analyses and test water quality during a storm event in order to build their knowledge about the stream and its connection to groundwater so they can best protect it in the future.

A third river-related project was funded that is intimately connected with your monitoring efforts. It's an invasive species monitoring project along riverways. Japanese knotweed, common reed grass, purple loosestrife and Japanese hops are the target species that citizens will monitor. The project, called "Invader Crusaders," is being developed by Laura Lueders at the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

Learn more at www.wisconsinrivers.org or contact Laura at 608.257.2424 x 110.

DNR Violation Hotline

If you see a severe water quality problem, such as a manure spill, you can call the DNR hotline at 1.800.TIP.WDNR (1.800.847.9367). Someone is available to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information about this service go to:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/hotline.htm>

Stream Monitoring Program Contacts:
WAV: Kris Stepenuck (608.265.3887)
Level 2: Chris Clayton (608.257.2424 x 120)
Program website: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu>

To be removed from this mailing list, contact Kim Leizinger at 608.890.0281 or e-mail her at leizinger@wisc.edu