Notice of Available Funding for WAV Volunteers to carry out Total Phosphorus Monitoring in Streams

The Water Action Volunteers (WAV) Stream Monitoring Program has a limited amount of funds available to allocate to active WAV citizen monitors and/or WAV monitoring groups to allow these individuals and/or groups to obtain total phosphorus monitoring data at their stream monitoring site(s) during the 2016 monitoring season. To allow all interested individuals and groups the chance to use the available funds, a short application process has been developed that allows WAV and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff to review potential sites to be monitored, and assess if total phosphorus data are needed at the site(s) to develop future impaired waters lists.

**Background:** Phosphorus is a nutrient found at high levels in most Wisconsin lakes, where it can trigger excess algae, weed growth and fish kills. High levels of phosphorus can also affect streams, which deliver phosphorus directly to lakes. Phosphorus enters streams attached to soil particles that erode from farm fields, construction sites and other disturbed lands. Its impact in streams is less apparent than in lakes due to their movement, but in some quiet areas, the settling of sediment can result in algae blooms and reduced biological habitat.

**The Role of Volunteer Monitors:** To assess streams, WAV volunteers can collect water samples to be analyzed for total phosphorus (TP) concentrations at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene during the growing season. A specific monitoring schedule (described in brief below) must be followed. Following monitoring, the site may be listed as impaired by the DNR if the data meets one of two criterion 1) the lower 90% confidence limit of the sample median exceeds the state criterion of 0.075 mg/L for streams (or 0.1 mg/L for rivers) or 2) there are corroborating DNR biological data to support an adverse response in the fish or macroinvertebrate communities at that site.

**Monitoring Description:** Following DNR methods, six phosphorus water samples must be collected at each site – one per month for six months between May and October 2016. Samples must be collected approximately 30 days apart and no samples can be collected within 15 days of one another. WAV staff will provide selected volunteers and/or groups with all the necessary training and monitoring supplies to conduct the monitoring in April. Unless previously trained by WAV staff to conduct total phosphorus monitoring using the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene for analysis, all individuals who will participate in the TP monitoring must attend a one-hour training located within reasonable distance of their homes to participate in the monitoring. No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

**Eligibility for Funding:** Individuals who participated in WAV Stream Monitoring during 2015 are eligible to apply. (Individuals who participated in WAV monitoring in previous years may apply, but applications from monitors who were active in 2015 will have higher priority for receiving funding.) Multiple volunteers from the same organization or group may apply to monitor for total phosphorus, but each individual may only apply to carry out TP monitoring at a maximum of three monitoring locations. Sites that were monitored for total phosphorus in either 2013, 2014, or 2015 are unlikely to need monitoring again in 2016, as no additional data are needed for the DNR to make impairment decisions for that site.
**How to Apply:** Complete the 2016 Total Phosphorus Monitoring Application (available at: [http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/level3/TP.html](http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/level3/TP.html)) and submit it by Sunday February 14, 2016.

**Requirements if Funded:** Individuals and groups that are funded to carry out TP monitoring must sample at the funded sites on the defined monthly schedule from May to October and ship samples on ice to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene as soon as possible after monitoring. In addition, at least one photo of each site should be submitted to WAV staff for inclusion in the DNR SWIMS database. (Awardees are more than welcome to submit multiple photos and include pictures of volunteers in action if they’d like.) Finally, following the monitoring season, awardees will be asked to complete a short online survey about the project and their experience so that WAV staff can improve the project in the future.

**Questions?** Questions may be directed to WAV staff Ilana Haimes at [ilana.haimes@wisconsin.gov](mailto:ilana.haimes@wisconsin.gov).