



Building a Support System for CSREES Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Efforts

Working Effectively with Volunteer Monitors



Volunteer water quality monitoring programs have a unique capacity for capturing the excitement and attention of local communities. Involving volunteer monitoring in your outreach or education efforts can benefit the community *and* produce valuable information.

Why Work With Volunteers?

- Source of credible data
- More comprehensive data
- Greater monitoring frequency
- Larger number of sites monitored
- Local knowledge
- Enhances local stewardship
- Gain Support for your efforts
- Cost effective (not cost free)



Volunteer Programs Assure Quality through:

Training and more training
Repetition
Routine sampling
Monitoring multiple indicators
QA/QC field and laboratory testing
Adhering to established procedures

44% of programs have a QA Plan (1998)
27% state approved
18% EPA-approved

Successful Volunteer Monitoring Programs:

- Are well-organized
- Have a clear purpose
- Provide clear staff, board, and volunteer roles
- Have strong leadership and coordination
- Involve partnerships
- Have good relations with decision-makers

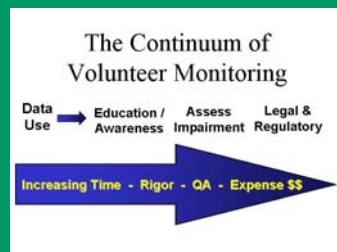


Successful Programs Also:

- Follow sound scientific protocols
- Have clear monitoring goals and questions
- Have written study design
- Provide clear documentation of all instructions
- Have appropriate monitoring scope and complexity for volunteer capabilities
- Have QA appropriate to data use

Volunteer Monitoring Makes A Difference!

- Identifies & solves problems locally
- Involves people in real science
- Raises awareness
- Provides information on places where no one else is looking
- Creates an informed constituency
- Leads to adoption by citizens of recommended best management practices (BMPs) for water quality protection



Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring National Facilitation Project:

- ❖ Identify current Extension volunteer monitoring programs
- ❖ Develop training materials to support and strengthen new and existing efforts
- ❖ Provide training to regional, state and local program coordinators
- ❖ Develop and establish Internet and web-based tools for data management and networking
- ❖ Increase collaboration and cooperation with other agencies through the establishment of a strong support system

<http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/>