

# Enjoy nature and make a difference by collecting valuable scientific data

Do you like being outside and have a passion for protecting our shared natural resources? With a commitment of only a few hours per month, you can become a volunteer stream monitor with Water Action Volunteers (WAV)!

WAV is a collaboration of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, and local groups and community members committed to **preserving, protecting and restoring Wisconsin's 86,888 miles of streams and rivers**. Partners gather high-quality stream data and share their knowledge to inform key resource management decisions that impact local communities.



### Did you know?

Insufficient data is a major hurdle to making informed decisions about local resources. Your stream monitoring will provide important baseline and trend data that may be the only data available for a particular waterbody.



*"I enjoy being out on the river and helping others learn the value of such a wonderful watershed so close to where they live." – Bill Keen, Verona*



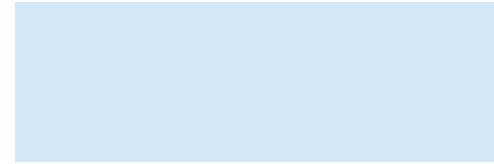
### Did you know?

Watershed practices and land uses affect water quality. Stream monitoring offers an opportunity for you to learn about the water quality of a local stream and how your actions can affect that stream.



[WaterActionVolunteers.org](http://WaterActionVolunteers.org)

Your local WAV coordinator is:



If no local contact is noted above, please contact:

WAV Program Staff  
wav@extension.wisc.edu  
608-331-0173

Learn how to get started by visiting:

[www.wateractionvolunteers.org](http://www.wateractionvolunteers.org)

Explore volunteer-collected stream data from across Wisconsin via our interactive, online dashboard at:

[www.wateractionvolunteers.org/data](http://www.wateractionvolunteers.org/data)



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Get to know your local stream  
with the  
**Water Action Volunteers**



Become a  
**Water Action  
Volunteer!**

- Join a network of over 500 volunteers of all ages across Wisconsin
- Have fun outside & connect with the natural world
- Learn about water quality & aquatic life in your local stream
- Collect valuable scientific data to inform stream management decisions

## What do WAV volunteers do?

As a new WAV volunteer, you'll learn how to monitor six important baseline elements of stream health using scientific methods:

- **Dissolved oxygen** – aquatic life depends on it.
- **Water temperature** – affects oxygen demand and can limit creatures' survival.
- **Transparency** – too many suspended particles in the water can be harmful to aquatic plants and other organisms.
- **Streamflow** – the amount of flowing water in a stream is an important habitat limitation.

- **Stream macroinvertebrates** – insects, worms, crustaceans, clams and other small, boneless creatures that are visible without the aid of a microscope are used to assess water quality based on their tolerance to conditions.
- **Aquatic invasive species** – introduced organisms can cause economic or environmental harm and disrupt the aquatic food web.

You'll monitor dissolved oxygen, temperature, transparency, streamflow and watch for aquatic invasive species once a month from May-October. You'll also monitor stream macroinvertebrates each spring and fall.

After your first year, you can attend advanced trainings to monitor nutrients and other pollutants, stream habitat quality, continuous temperature with in-stream sensors, and in-depth aquatic invasive species monitoring.

## Who can volunteer?

Anyone interested in science, the environment and learning more about streams and water quality would make a great volunteer stream monitor. Active volunteers include:

- Individuals and families
- Sporting groups (Trout Unlimited, etc.)
- Schools and youth groups (4-H, scouts, etc.)
- Community organizations (watershed councils, etc.)

## How can you get involved?

The first step is to contact your local WAV coordinator or the statewide WAV Program Staff (see back panel). Trainings are held throughout the state each year and combine classroom instruction and hands-on field training to teach you to measure five WAV parameters of stream health. Your local coordinator can tell you when a training is scheduled in your area, or you can visit the WAV website to see upcoming training sessions. Once you've been trained, you can begin monitoring.



## How much time is required?

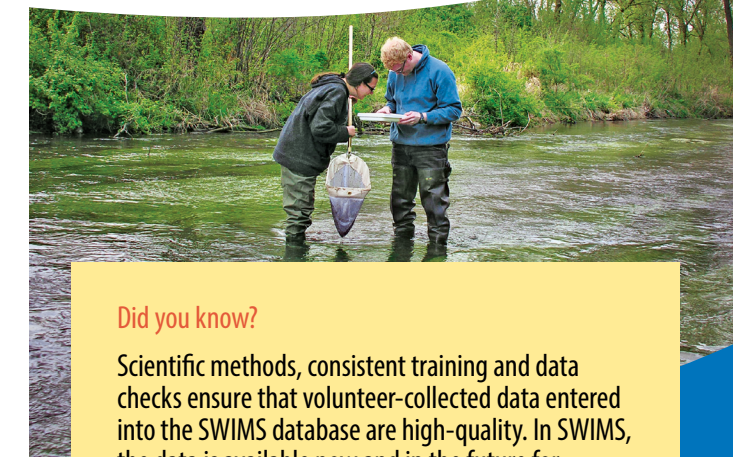
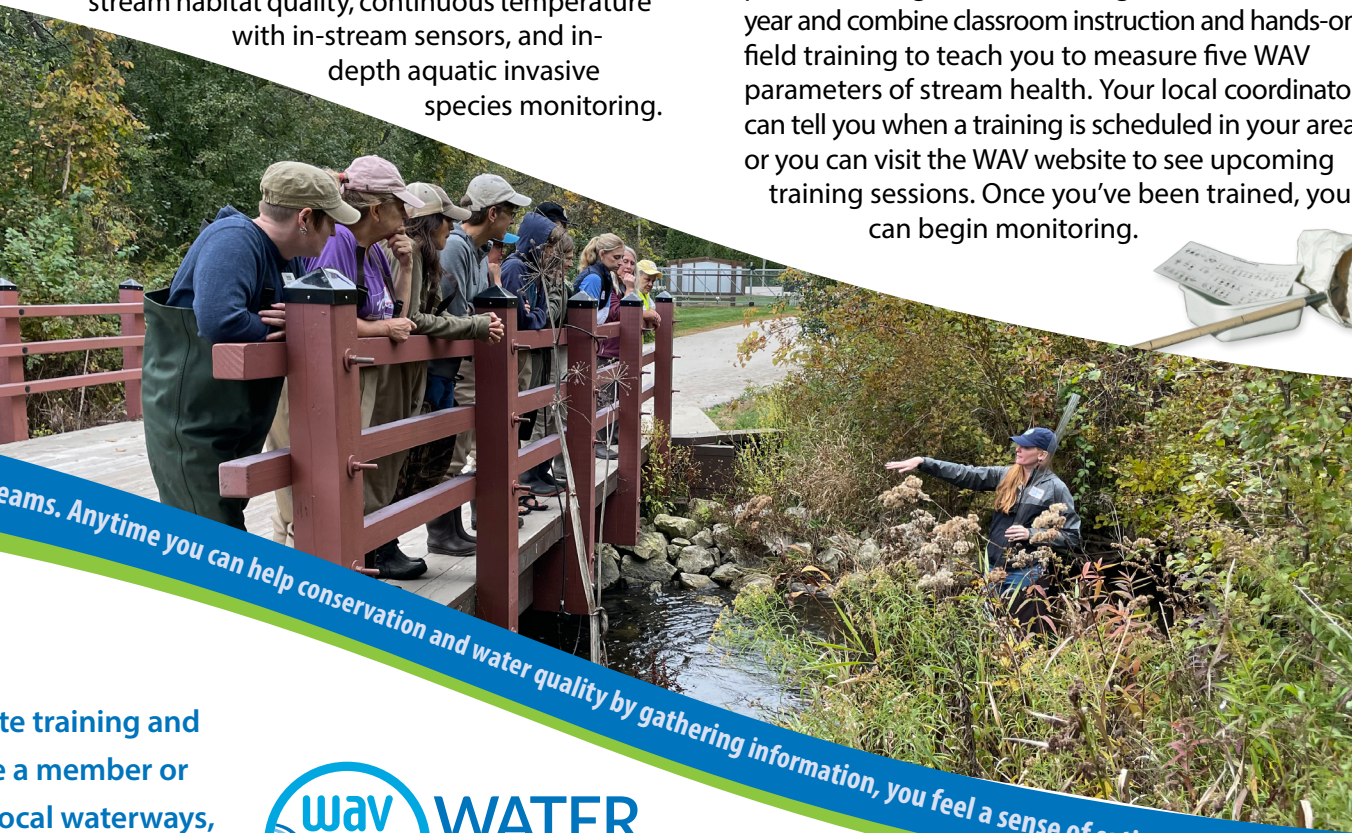
Not much! Before you begin monitoring, WAV will teach you about the scientific tools and techniques that you'll use. After the initial 4 to 6 hour field training, you can expect to spend 6-10 hours per year monitoring your local stream.

## Where will you monitor?

A WAV volunteer monitors one or more sites as an individual or part of a 2-3 person team. Volunteers monitor streams and rivers that can be safely entered while wearing hip waders. Many WAV stream monitors choose a site based on their personal interest or proximity to their home or school. Some programs work with local and state agencies to coordinate monitoring locations.

## What happens to collected data?

The data you collect are entered into the WDNR's public Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) online database. Anyone with web access can view the data in the database, which is searchable by county, stream or site name.



*"I felt a sense of accomplishment monitoring streams. Anytime you can help conservation and water quality by gathering information, you feel a sense of satisfaction." – Harvey Colrupe, Iola*

## Are you a member or leader of a group or association?

WAV relies heavily on local groups to coordinate training and monitoring initiatives across the state. If you're a member or leader of a group with a shared dedication to local waterways, please contact WAV Program Staff (see back panel) for details on how your group can help.

