

## April Newsletter

WAV's stream monitoring season begins in just a few weeks! If you haven't already, check your monitoring supplies and chemicals to make sure you have everything you need to monitor monthly through October. Reach out to your local WAV Coordinator, or WAV program staff, if you need any supplies.

WAV raised \$881 during UW-Madison's annual day of giving, Day of the Badger, thanks to the generous support of our network! These funds will go towards expanding volunteer stream monitoring and education to underserved regions of the state and training new groups of passionate residents who will monitor and advocate for the quality of their local waters for many years to come.

More importantly, [your kind donations](#) will allow us to continue to provide **free** field trainings, water quality monitoring equipment, and expertise to build a knowledgeable network of stream monitoring volunteers across Wisconsin. Thank you!

**Read on to learn more about WAV's upcoming trainings, more volunteer opportunities, and best safety practices for being on flowing waters.**

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## Check Out Our WAV Stream Trainings



Interested in joining the Water Action Volunteers Program as a stream monitor? Check out our **free** spring and summer 2025 volunteer training across the state!

- ***New to stream monitoring?*** Our **Baseline Stream Monitoring Trainings** are designed for new volunteers and will cover how to measure five important elements of stream health using scientific tools and techniques. Offered every spring from late April to June.
- ***Interested in aquatic invasive species (AIS)?*** Our **Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Trainings** will cover how to identify and report invasive species. Offered around the state in the summer.

### 2025 Volunteer Trainings

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## WAV Safety Best Practices: Spring Flows

As winter turns into spring, many of our volunteers are beginning to (or continuing to!) wade into streams to monitor the health of our waterways. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as the weather warms.



**Streams are moving waters and WAV volunteers enjoy watching them change throughout the seasons.**

You may encounter slippery surfaces, steep banks, deeper pools where fish like to hide, and areas of stronger currents. Boots and waders are a must to protect your feet from sharp objects on the stream bottom. You are encouraged to wear a life jacket for safety, as well as gloves and safety glasses when handling chemicals.



**Dress appropriately for being in the field and prepare for weather such as rain, wind, and hot or cold temperatures.**

Come prepared with whatever you need to be comfortable while monitoring, such as sunscreen, bug spray, a hat, a rain jacket, warm layers, water, snacks, or even a camp chair or stool for sitting on. Monitoring should not take place during lightning, thunderstorms, or severe weather. Delay monitoring if flows are high or strong.



**Some monitoring sites are located in remote areas with limited cellular reception while others are located in urban areas.**

It's good practice to have a first aid kit on hand and be familiar with nearby health care centers in case you need them. We strongly recommend bringing someone with you to monitor.

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# Volunteer with CoCORaHS

## Anyone Can Become a Weather Observer



Join at [CoCoRaHS.org](http://CoCoRaHS.org) today to connect with a diverse group of volunteers who report daily how much precipitation fell in their backyards!

The **Community Collaborative Rainfall Hail & Snowfall** network, or CoCoRaHS (pronounced KO-ko-rozz), is a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow) in their local communities to improve weather forecasts and help local communities prepare for droughts or floods.

The amount of rain (or snowmelt) can have a direct impact on the water quality in the stream or lake you monitor. Runoff and precipitation carry nutrients and contaminants into surface water, and research shows that larger and more intense events impact water quality. Likewise, drought reduces water volume, impacting aquatic life. Having one or more precipitation records in or near the watershed you monitor may provide insight into the results you are seeing.

The key to improving weather forecasts and improving accuracy is knowing what actually happened on the ground—did the forecasted amount of rain fall? How much water is in the 8 inches of snow remaining on the ground? Radar can estimate precipitation, but actual data is much more useful

Accurate weather forecasts are also critical to local government. Whether it's deciding if and when to start salting operations, staging barricades for an expected flood-related road closure or planning maintenance operations, decisions are made based on the weather forecast impact operations and the budget.

The National Weather Service, the Wisconsin State Climatologist, and University of Wisconsin-Madison's Division of Extension need your help in improving forecast accuracy—and it takes **less than two minutes per day** to check an official rain gauge once daily and provide the number to the National Weather Service.

Wisconsin currently has more than 500 voluntary weather observers that are part of the CoCoRaHS program. Unfortunately, they are not evenly distributed across the state, leaving certain areas with little or no information.

Becoming a weather observer is a BEAR-y good idea! Anyone with an interest in taking daily observations can become a part of CoCoRaHS and start reporting today! Learn more and join at [www.WisconsinWeatherWatchers.org](http://www.WisconsinWeatherWatchers.org).

CoCoRaHS Website

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## Reminder: New MyWisconsin ID login for SWIMS database starting May 6

As a reminder, starting in early May, the DNR is switching to a new login system called MyWisconsinID. Currently, you use your WAMS ID to log into the SWIMS database. MyWisconsinID will replace your WAMS ID.

### *Why MyWisconsinID?*

- It is a more secure login system and includes multi-factor authentication (MFA).
- It allows individuals to access multiple online state services and systems using a single user ID and password, including the SWIMS database.
- It has a helpline to support users with issues, such as login issues.

Aside from a new method of logging in, nothing else in SWIMS will be changing. All your data will still be preserved, and the way you enter data will be the same. Everything in SWIMS will look, feel, and function the same as before. The only part changing is your method of logging-in - and you will need to create a new login username and password.

### Actions to take before May

1. Make sure all the information in your current WAMS profile is up to date, especially your email address.
  - a. [Instructions for updating your WAMS profile](#) can be found at this link.
2. Create a MyWisconsin ID: [Step by step instructions can be found at this link](#).
  - a. Your MyWisconsin ID email address should match your updated WAMS email address.
  - b. Please note that the new log in-process will require setting up "multi-factor authentication" (MFA), to be used each time you log in to SWIMS. MFA is a way to prove who you are by using two different types of security checks, such as entering a code texted to your phone.
3. We recommend choosing the "phone" option for MFA. You can use any of the listed MFAs available. Some may require downloading additional apps on your phone.

**While registering for a MyWisconsin ID, keep in mind:**

- A specific MyWisconsin ID is for an individual person, not a facility or company, and should **NEVER** be used by others.
- Because multi-factor authentication is used, the **MyWisconsin ID account cannot be shared with others** - people entering data must use their own account.

We will let you know when the switch over from WAMS to MyWisconsin ID has occurred. The date is tentatively set for May 6, but may change slightly. For now, please continue to use your WAMS ID to log into SWIMS until further notice.

Please remember that all SWIMS inquiries for Water Action Volunteers can be sent to: [wav@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wav@extension.wisc.edu). If you email DNR directly, you will likely be redirected back to us and may risk increased response times.

**We are grateful for your help in preparing for this change!**

[Create a MyWisconsin ID](#)

### Questions or suggestions? Contact us!

Phone: (608) 331-0173  
Email: [wav@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wav@extension.wisc.edu)  
[wateractionvolunteers.org](http://wateractionvolunteers.org)



The Water Action Volunteers (WAV) stream monitoring program is an ongoing partnership between the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and nearly 50 local partner groups and organizations.

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