Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

# News from WAV

**MAY 2025**

## Connect with Wisconsin's stream volunteers

*(Above) Volunteers learn to monitor streamflow during a WAV baseline stream training in Brodhead.*

May already?! As spring kicks off for stream and river monitoring, WAV volunteers of all ages are pulling on their boots and waders and visiting our state's beautiful streams and rivers. To put it in perspective, in 2024, **over 480** volunteers (and their teammates!) collected water quality and biological data at **535 stream and river** sites across Wisconsin. That's a ton of dedication to protecting our shared waterways!

As a way of showing our gratitude for this tremendous effort and to connect stream and river volunteers across Wisconsin, we would like to spotlight short stories and photos from WAV volunteers in this newsletter and on our

social media (Facebook and Instagram). Whether it is a special experience during your monthly stream monitoring, your favorite place on a local stream, or a cool aquatic find, we'd love to share it with the WAV volunteer network! Groups are welcome to submit together.

Happy monitoring!

**Submit a Spotlight**

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**READ ON FOR...**



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# Fun with Macroinvertebrates


*(Above) Landing page of the Macroinvertebrates.org website.*

Many of us volunteering in stream monitoring are familiar with "macroinvertebrates", but most people don't know why these animals are indicators of stream health.

According to the EPA, "macroinvertebrates are small organisms without a backbone that are visible to the naked eye and large enough to be easily collected." They typically live in water for some, if not all, stages of their life. Think crayfish, mayflies, aquatic worms, or beetles.

Macroinvertebrates are helpful in water monitoring as they have "differing sensitives to chemical pollution and physical disturbances" (EPA). In short, knowing how many and what kind of macroinvertebrates are living in a body of water can help tell us how healthy or unhealthy the habitat is for them. If you find multiple stonefly larvae during your spring biotic index (look for two tails!), your stream is likely healthy.

That's why WAV has developed a Biotic Index poster to help our volunteers and students of all ages identify and count macroinvertebrates!

Want an on the go way of identifying macroinvertebrates?
We recommend the **PocketMacros app** (available for Android and iPhone)!

The **PocketMacros mobile app** is part of an interdisciplinary research and development effort to innovate new kinds of digital teaching and learning tools to support aquatic insect and macroinvertebrate identification activities in citizen science, environmental education, fishing, and watershed stewardship. *(from Macroinvertebrates.org)*

## Key to Life in the River & Biotic Index *in Spanish*

We are excited to share that our *Key to the Life in the River* and *Biotic Index Poster* are now accessible in English **AND** Spanish! What are *Key to Life in the River* and the *Biotic Index Poster*?


The *Key to the Life in the River* is a field guide with drawings that describe macroinvertebrates found in rivers. Use it on your next adventure to a stream or in the classroom.

**English** | **Spanish (Español)**

The *Biotic Index Poster* helps assess water quality by counting the number of macroinvertebrates in the body of water. Different invertebrates have different tolerances to pollution, so counting how many different groups of invertebrates are present can help tell how polluted the water is!

**English** | **Spanish (Español)**


# Skills Refresher

## WAV's Baseline Monitoring Methods

*(Above) Volunteer testing dissolved oxygen on-site using a Hach Kit.*

Do you need a refresher on the baseline stream monitoring methods? Here are two ways you can refresh your skills:

- **Watch the recording** from our April Baseline Monitoring Refresher Webinar (1 hour)
- Take our free **Online Introduction to WAV course** (1-2 hours)

And remember, you can always connect with **your local WAV Coordinator** for support or to find a nearby volunteer team to shadow.

# MyWisconsin ID for SWIMS has Launched!

The new MyWisconsin ID method of logging in to the SWIMS database has launched. Please view the instructional video on how to create a MyWisconsin ID and obtain access to SWIMS.

(VIDEO) How to Create a MyWisconsin ID Account and Link it to the SWIMS Database

Contact us with any questions: wav@extension.wisc.edu

**Create a MyWisconsin ID**

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**Help preserve and protect Wisconsin's streams**

**DONATE**

**Water Action Volunteers Program (WAV)**
Phone: (608) 331-0173
Email: wav@extension.wisc.edu
wateractionvolunteers.org

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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.